

**POST-HOLOCAUST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
FOR
GERMAN WOMEN**

**A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**by
Gabriele H. Mayer**

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ABSTRACT

Post-Holocaust Religious Education

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The twentieth century received its unique stamp through the *Shoah*, the attempt of German National Socialism to annihilate European Jewry. More than 50 years have passed, and now second and third generation Germans are left with that heritage. Public discourse in Germany regarding that heritage seems to be at an impasse. At the same time, research in various disciplines indicates increasing attention in private discourse.

Discussion is also lacking in regard to women. For a long time, women were not at all recognized as actors during the Third Reich and later. The sexist implications of the Nazi ideology had a strong impact on women's situations and even on feminist perspectives.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the specific situations of second- and third- generation German women, who have been brought up in a culture that exposes them to victim experiences and perpetrator characteristics. How can they learn to face the perpetrator heritage and integrate it into their identity as women, as Christians and as Germans? The thesis of this dissertation is that Christian women in Germany with unique experiences as victims and victimizers, need educational opportunities to relate to that burdensome past and develop an integrated identity; this process will have reconciling potentiality. Relating and responding to the German past is essential for reforming identity, for opening a constructive dialogue between the Jewish and Christian communities, and for developing an educational process that contributes to reconciliation.

Besides an extensive literature review, this dissertation reports on three empirical field studies that shed light on the central research question. Field Study I was conducted

with thirty women in Germany, focusing on how they relate to the Holocaust and how that affects their Christian, gender, and national identity. For Field Study II, I interviewed another group of thirty women before and after their visit to the memorial site Bergen-Belsen, a former concentration-camp in Niedersachsen, Germany. Field Study III was an analysis of published statements of young German women after a four-week exchange program with young American Jews. They confronted the Holocaust together. This analysis of their accounts focuses on moments of transformation for these young people of the third generation.

Drawing from the literature review and these three empirical studies, the dissertation concludes with proposals for religious educational practices to provide direction for a journey toward integration. German women are encouraged to participate in movements that teach them how to become open and vulnerable, working through processes that allow them to relate to the Holocaust in a way that enables them to build bridges, despite a divisive past.

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This work would not have been accomplished without the support and encouragement of many different people. I would like to name them as an expression of my deeply felt gratitude.

In the process of coming to the United States and studying abroad, I met Jewish and Christian people who were valuable companions in wrestling with my German identity in light of the Holocaust. I recall Dr. Friedman and Suzanne Smailes at United Theological Seminary.

At the Claremont School of Theology, I met Rabbi Elenore Bohm Goodman in a seminar. She became such a wonderful conversation partner in the early stages of this work.

The joint study project "Women and the Holocaust" with Fran Sterling was a unique experience: For a whole semester we met bi-weekly and shared and discussed experiences, questions, and reflections from an American-Jewish and German-Christian perspective.

Getting acquainted with Professor John Roth and his integrity and committed way of teaching a Holocaust seminar affirmed my decision to write a dissertation in this area. Each conversation in his office left me encouraged and empowered in the midst of facing unfathomable evil.

Professor Kathleen Greider agreed to join the dissertation committee despite her research leave. Her way of posing questions was very instrumental in clarifying directions I needed to go.

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Elaine Walker, the thesis secretary, not only cared for correct forms, but also for the sanity of the author. Thank you for coordinating the finals between two continents.

Without supportive friends, this dissertation would not have been completed : Julie Porter and Dagmar Grefe, who opened door and refrigerator and provided comfort; Dana Newlove and Alison Kafer who prevented the author from becoming homeless in the final weeks and offered a friendly refuge.

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PREFACE

This thesis emerged out of an existential concern rather than from a need to meet an academic requirement. It is part of my own process of dealing with my German identity and the shadow of our terrible past. Various encounters abroad have made me aware of that task. My feminist perspective challenges me to relate it to the situation of women. Since the personal is also the political, I want to share a few encounters that shaped my own learning process.

Born in Germany in 1958, I belong to the second generation after the Third Reich. In school, we learned about the facts of World War II and National Socialism, but we were not taught how to relate to that past in a meaningful way. Conversely, my father's experiences impacted our family life deeply. As a young soldier of 22 years, he was seriously injured and remains handicapped. He also lost four of his brothers in the fighting. Because of his war injury, he has been hospitalized frequently. At age 49, he was granted disability retirement. His war trauma and the loss of his brothers impacted our family life deeply, but the ethical dimensions of the Third Reich remained unspoken and were not discussed.

After high school and "Abitur," I worked in a kibbutz in Israel for three months. Painfully, I had to recognize that my protected Christian upbringing had not prepared me to meet living Jews. In the kibbutz ironing room, I assisted two friendly women from Hungary. One of them was a survivor of the concentration camp Treblinka. When she realized my national identity, she withdrew from having contact with me. I realized that my identity was intrinsically intertwined with my nation's past, which I could not escape simply through my attempt to behave differently as an individual.

Then I enrolled at the Training Center for diaconal ministers and social workers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg. Studies and twelve years of working

with youth and young adults awakened my awareness regarding the marginalization of girls and young women. I then became involved in issues raised by feminist theologians.

Through the World Council of Churches, I received the opportunity in 1994 to study in Dayton, Ohio, at United Theological Seminary. I was the only German on the campus; there, I was exposed to very ambiguous perspectives on Germany. People expressed appreciation for a long theological and philosophical tradition, but also, again and again, they spoke reminders of the Nazi past. In Dayton, I also encountered my first Jewish professor. Once, he invited me to talk to his Holocaust class as a second generation German, together with a daughter of survivors; I found this to be a very stressful experience. In Dayton, I also attended the Yom HaShoah observance for the first time, an event to remember the liberation of the concentration and death camps and to honor the six million Jews who had been killed. I again experienced an overwhelming sense of guilt, responsibility, and shame to be a member of that terrible nation. Entering the door, a friend of mine, a Jewish lesbian, whispered in my ear: you do not have only one heritage, you have at least a double heritage - being German and being lesbian.¹ This awareness introduced a new perspective into my struggle to relate with the reality of belonging to the perpetrator nation, namely that this heritage is at least very ambivalent.²

Katharina von Kellenbach points to a crucial difference between the oppressors and the oppressed:

In the last analysis, oppression is the problem of the oppressor. Unfortunately, oppression functions in such a way that those who benefit from oppression do not feel their deformation unless the oppressed challenge the status quo. . . . The suffering of the oppressed, be they poor, Black, Jewish, gay or female is rendered somewhat invisible to those who benefit from it. Oppressors have the privilege of

¹Part of the National Socialist ideology was also to purify the Aryan race of homosexuals.

² The insight of having to deal with a victimizer and victim heritage seemed to provide support at times against the unfathomable burden of guilt and responsibility stemming from the victimizer heritage.

choosing whether to notice or to ignore suffering. It is the privilege of choice which distinguishes perpetrators from victims.³

Living abroad, meeting Jewish people, has helped me to make the choice to study the implications of the Holocaust.

³ Katharina von Kellenbach, Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 3-4.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

At the closure of this century, people tend to look back and -- at the same time -- worry about the approaching century. The twentieth century received its unique stamp through the *Shoah*, the attempt of German National Socialism to annihilate European Jewry. More than 50 years have passed since the military defeat of Germany and the liberation of the concentration camps. Some contemporaries of that period are still alive, but the majority of Germans are now members of the second and third generation. Several problems emerge in this context. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce these problems, to articulate a thesis which gives hope for the future, to delineate employed methods, to provide an overview of the author's three field studies, to define some key terms and their utilization in this work, and finally to address the scope and limitations of the dissertation. At the end of Chapter 1, the design and flow of the dissertation will be mapped.

The Problems and Their Contexts

The central problem to be addressed in this dissertation is the inability of German post-war generations to relate to the Holocaust heritage. The problem is manifested in several ways.

First, a variety of publications from different fields suggests that the National Socialist past is still effective without having been integrated constructively. In 1979, the American movie *Holocaust* was shown on German television. For the first time, the Holocaust entered publicly and emotionally into German post-war awareness. Jürgen Habermas, a leading thinker of the Frankfurter Schule, stated in 1986:

Our life's form is tied to that of our parents and grandparents through a web of familial, local, political, and also intellectual traditions which can hardly be

untangled - thus through an historical milieu which has made us into what we are today. No one can steal away out of this milieu, because our identity as Germans, as well as individuals, is indissolubly enmeshed in it.¹

In 1987, Ralph Giordano published Die zweite Schuld oder Von der Last Deutscher zu sein.² Giordano received, in a relatively short time, more than 1200 letters responding to this book, in which he describes Germany's "second guilt": allowing the perpetrators of the Nazi terror regime to go on with their lives. In sum, as the perpetrator nation, German society as a whole did not develop a constructive relationship to its National Socialist past.

A second problem is that German women, even feminists, have not learned to acknowledge their share of responsibility for the Holocaust. That accusation will understandably be shocking and considered by some to be bitterly unfair within the context of the women's movement, within which consciousness-raising has focused largely on women's victimization in patriarchal societies. In contrast, the Berlin sociology professor Christina Thürmer-Rohr has challenged the so-called female ethic of caring (Carol Gilligan), and coined the term *Mittäterschaft* (co-complicity or accomplicity) of women, pointing to the supportive role of women during the era of National Socialism and in a patriarchal society in general. Because of the long maintained "collective silence,"³ women of the second and third generation participate in the common refusal to relate to their nation's past and its precipitation of Auschwitz.

¹Jürgen Habermas, "Eine Art Schadensabwicklung. Die apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung" (Finalizing the damages: Apologetic tendencies in the writing of contemporary history) *Die Zeit*, 11 July 1986. Cited in Barbara Heimannsborg, "The Work of Remembering: A Psychodynamic View of the Nazi Past as It Exists in Germany Today," in The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame; eds. Barbara Heimannsborg and Christoph I. Schmidt, trans. Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 164.

²Ralph Giordano, Die zweite Schuld oder Von der Last Deutscher zu sein (The second guilt or On the burden to be a German) (München: Knauer, 1990).

³Barbara Heimannsborg and Christoph J. Schmidt, eds. The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame, trans. Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993).

A third problem has to do with the lack of theological questioning about implications of the Holocaust among Christians and the corresponding failure of Christians to integrate Holocaust realities into their lives. Dorothee Sölle and Jean Baptist Metz, two prominent German representatives of the so-called "political theology," were thrust onto their theological journey after being existentially shattered by the theological implications of the Holocaust. Formerly young contemporaries of National Socialism, their way of doing theology was decisively shaped by their nation's heritage. I wonder how many Christians are aware of the connection between Sölle's and Metz's current involvement in justice issues and their earlier wrestling with the theological and political implications of the Holocaust. The search for theological implications of the Holocaust has not yet fully entered mainstream churches nor mainstream seminaries.

A fourth problem is the brokenness across communities. More than 50 years after the Holocaust, Jewish, Christian, and other concerned communities are (more or less) wrestling in different contexts with their respective shadows of that past. For the most part, however, there is no intentional *Kommunikationskultur* among them. The historical victim/victimizer dichotomy and the different discourses in their respective communities are separating them. Since 1968, the Protestant Church Congress (*Evangelischer Deutscher Kirchentag*) has been hosting the forum "Christian-Jewish Dialogue," but the issues raised and their implications for healing the past and building a united future have not yet penetrated the awareness of local communities.

Presently, many churchwomen are involved in caring activities and are working towards justice. In light of preliminary studies, I propose that serious work has to be done among German women of the second and third generation who consider themselves Christian. This raises the fifth issue which is the central focus of the dissertation. Standing at the nexus of the other issues, the inability of current German Christian women to relate to that burdensome past inhibits the development of an integrated identity that might have

reconciling potentiality. Psychological theorists, such as Carl Gustav Jung and James Fowler, highlight the human task of facing the shadow of one's existence and maturing to a conjunctive stage of faith.⁴ In particular, Christians still need to acknowledge to what degree Christianity has contributed to the centuries-old "longest hatred."⁵ Katharina von Kellenbach's critical work on Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings is not enough known.⁶ Her deconstruction of still existing anti-Judaism and the related work of others are not yet known and integrated by many churchwomen as relevant to their lives. In sum: encounters with the silenced past and encounters with victims of that past are of particular urgency.

Thesis and its Argumentation

For German Christian women, who have the complex experience of being both victims and victimizers, learning to relate and respond to the German National Socialist past is essential for reforming identity, for opening a constructive dialogue between the Jewish and Christian communities, and for engaging in an educational process that contributes to reconciliation. Toward this end, I argue for two educational tasks:

1. Identity formation as individual work in each community
2. Encountering "the other" as a joint endeavor

Both tasks are deeply relational and strongly interwoven with one another.

⁴Carl Gustav Jung, The Undiscovered Self, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Penguin Books, 1958); James Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

⁵Edward H. Flannery says that "antisemitism is the longest and deepest hatred of human history." The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Antisemitism, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 284.

⁶Katharina von Kellenbach, Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 3-4.

This dissertation will begin with the overdue task of identity formation: how German women need to reflect not only on their individual journeys and their families' history, but also on their nation's past and their church's share of guilt in precipitating the Holocaust. Barbara Heimannsberg argues: "Probably a knowledge of history in and of itself makes up a comparatively small part of one's sense of identity. More relevant is one's relationship to history."⁷ Striving for a mature identity requires one to acknowledge the ambiguity of caring. Looking at it from a feminist perspective, women need to take into account that they come from a tradition of being victim and victimizer. Acknowledging one's own embeddedness in evil might enhance the ability to be aware of evil and to take responsibility for one's own shadow side, and for one's family heritage and national past. This dissertation will identify clues for encouraging women to engage in that complex identity-formation process. This process might be precipitated by specific encounters, age-related development, family events, experiences of discrimination, and awareness of one's own ability to be led astray and to do evil.

This dissertation will also identify the historical, political and gender contexts which have contributed to Germans' lack of self-conscious relating with the German National Socialist past and their common inability to reach out to communities of survivors. Jews and Germans who take the risk to meet one another and to confront the Holocaust together become aware that the temporal distance from the *Shoah* is an ambiguous gift. Björn Krondorfer points out that the potential for ideological distortion grows as the temporal distance from the *Shoah* widens.⁸ Thus, we urgently need direct

⁷Heimannsberg, 166.

⁸Björn Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation: Encounters between Young Jews and Germans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

encounters. This insight is articulated by Jean Baptist Metz, namely that Christians can form and sufficiently understand their identity only in a face-to-face encounter with Jews.

Encounters between German Christian women and Jewish women might help German women in both groups to face and acknowledge their own shadows and the projected shadows of the "other." Listening to the voices of survivors and their descendants can reveal the invisible suffering of the victims. I want to take a closer look at the dynamic which occurs at the intersection where the shadow of the *Shoah* for Jewish people and the shadow of the Holocaust for German Christian women interact. Experiences and insights precipitated by such encounters will have an impact on one's perception of "the other," and also on one's distinctive identity. Furthermore, transforming encounters between individual women may influence their respective communities and, thus, decrease the distance between them. Hopefully, such encounters can suggest creative ways to bridge past and current abysses.

Educational Methods for Conflictual Situations

The work of this dissertation is supported by several educational efforts that already exist. In this section, we will explore three distinctive educational projects that deal with conflictual situations: Björn Krondorfer's exchange programs facing the Holocaust, the interreligious learning project "Catholic-Jewish Colloquy," and a conflict mediation training model by Christians Empowering for Reconciliation and Justice (CERJ). Identifying the underlying educational methodology of each project is critical to the purposes of this section.

Exchange Programs

One of the best educational programs available for post-Holocaust education is Björn Krondorfer's international exchange program, which was conducted four times in four summers. The purpose was to enable people to encounter their histories through the eyes of others. The program is described in more detail in Chapter 2 and Appendix C. Here

the focal point is on the pedagogical goals, educational means, and format of those programs, as described in a publication of the German Federal Government, "Biographical work in Jewish-German exchange groups after the Shoah."⁹

Krondorfer's four-week programs were designed as "facilitated encounters," which means that two persons planned and facilitated the whole process. The various program elements embraced testimonies, discussions, lectures, field trips, films, and active learning exercises. They were intended to foster a personal confrontation with the Holocaust on the emotional and intellectual level by involving participants in the historical and present meaning of the Holocaust.¹⁰ Krondorfer and his co-facilitator Staffa identified learning goals for the programs in 1991, 1993, and 1995, having done some corrections in light of their experiences in 1989. In the three later programs, they provided more space for group-oriented discussion, took out some program elements, and did less traveling.

They continued to pursue the following six goals: In a caring place provided by the program, participants were encouraged to work through their nation's traumatic past and develop a way of remembering. They reflected on specific issues of the third generation. They were supposed to gain personal access to that history. They were encouraged to become aware of their own motivations and emotions related to Holocaust remembrance traditions. They became aware of perceptions of the "other" group. The intention was to foster a more reality-bound perception of the "other" group.

Krondorfer and his colleagues emphasized from the very beginning of the seminar that one's own biography will be decisive for understanding the Shoah.¹¹ To me, this

⁹Björn Krondorfer, "Biographische Arbeit in jüdische/deutschen Begegnungsgruppen nach der Shoah" (Biographical work in Jewish-German encounter groups after the Shoah), in Biographische Arbeit in der Erwachsenenbildung: Beispiele aus der Praxis, ed. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie (Berlin: Oktoberdruck, 1998), 19-42.

¹⁰Ibid., 24.

¹¹Ibid., 29.

emphasis seems to make all the difference - to locate oneself in the whole context; it means a much more intense confrontation, especially for German students.

The first day was devoted to sharing one's family story in small mixed groups by showing family photos and other documents from that time. Two learning processes were precipitated through this family historical approach. First, visual displays of family documents and photos revealed group patterns, cultural patterns, and differences between the Jewish and German participants. Thus, the historical differences between the victims' and perpetrators' situation became obvious. Second, almost contradicting this first learning, students recognized individual traits in these stories. Individual stories raised questions regarding unconscious stereotypes about "the Jews" and "the Germans." Clichés and fixations could be addressed as something internal to the listener but also shaped by a particular communal discourse.

Those programs allow multidimensional learning. Krondorfer weaves together three educational threads: theme-oriented exercises, group dynamics, and biographical work. This biographical approach to the Holocaust involves holistic learning, allowing "the historical burden of the Shoah to become transformed with personal and emotional significance."¹² Reflecting on the method of biographical work in Jewish-German encounters, Björn Krondorfer highlights the importance of "a mutual interplay between individual motivations and societal patterns."¹³ Otherwise, individual behavior can easily be blamed and labeled as moral failure, and the potential for transformation can be missed. Krondorfer emphasizes also that the method cannot be considered separately from the content.¹⁴ This becomes obvious if we consider the relational dimension of those summer

¹²Ibid., 37.

¹³Ibid., 39.

¹⁴Ibid., 38.

programs. Mary Elizabeth Moore described the power of stories in a narrative educational method; they contribute to relational teaching.¹⁵

Interreligious Learning Project

Another extended educational effort has been implemented in a long-term interreligious learning program. In 1992, the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore received a considerable grant for the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium. Over a three-year period, twenty-two Catholic and Jewish professionals and educators gathered six times for intensive and interactive retreats. In describing their educational processes, Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee emphasized that participants were encouraged to utilize a variety of available resources, such as readings, guest scholars, and one another. They were expected to read seventeen books; each of which was introduced with particular questions, fostering subsequent group discussions. Boys and Lee are convinced that "this emphasis on study through preparation and discussion [were] crucial to the transformational process."¹⁶ They wanted to pursue dialogue, which is more than "sharing opinions and uninformed perspectives."¹⁷

Conflict Mediation Program

One other educational effort has been a conflict mediation program, developed over a period of more than twenty years by Plowshares Institute. On March 8, 1999, the Plowshare Institute in Los Angeles, in cooperation with Christians Empowering for Reconciliation and Justice (CERJ) conducted a workshop for the Claremont School of Theology community, introducing basic skills for community conflict transformation. These skills had been developed in South Africa, in the context of overcoming apartheid

¹⁵Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, Teaching from the Heart: Theology and Educational Method (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 131-64.

¹⁶Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, "The Catholic-Jewish Colloquium: An Experiment in Interreligious Learning," Religious Education 91, no. 4 (fall 1996): 420-66.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 435.

and reconstructing a country torn apart by racism. South Africans observed that resistance during apartheid seemed easier than reconstructing their country after long decades of violence, discrimination and violation of basic human rights, affecting a majority of the people. This conflict mediation model is now being shared as a gift from the southern hemisphere to us in the northern hemisphere.

This model suggests that conflict mediation is a successful approach to resolving conflicts.¹⁸ People are trained in analyzing conflicts and practicing mediation. Stages of mediation include the introduction stage, the story-telling stage, the problem-solving stage and the agreement stage. A key method for teaching mediation skills is analyzing case studies.

Case studies are an approach to teaching and learning in which insights can be gained from a specific slice of reality. Mary Elizabeth Moore uses the metaphor of midwifery, describing the role of the teacher in relation to people's engagement with case studies. Students are encouraged to look closely at a particular situation and may retrieve new wisdom, similar to giving birth to new ideas. The Plowshare Institute and CERJ pushed the case study method further by means of carefully prepared role plays where students get involved in interacting dynamics and are taught to reflect on the various conflict dimensions.

Methods of the Dissertation

This dissertation will employ three methods to unearth insights from a variety of fields in order to gather, analyze, and interpret descriptive data. The first method is field studies, utilizing questionnaires and written reports of educational experiences. Three field studies are described and reported in more detail in Chapter 2. The foci of the three studies

¹⁸Bob Evans and Alice Evans, Agents of Reconciliation and Transformation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, forthcoming).

are identity, educative action, and moments of transformation. A second method of the dissertation is an extensive literature review, prominent in chapters 3 and 4. Additionally, in chapters 7 and 8, the case study method will be employed in analyzing educational events.

Much of this work draws heavily on German sources, especially Field Study I, Field Study II, and the literature review in Chapter 3. All of these translations are provided by the author. In translating the responses of the interviewees (in Appendix A and B), I stayed as closely as possible to the original tone of the women's statements. In translating book titles (footnotes and bibliography) and quotations (text), I followed the same intention. Books already published in English are referred to and quoted with the published English translation.

Introduction to and Overview of Field Study I, II, and III

Because the three field studies help frame the questions and possibilities of this dissertation, I will introduce them more fully in these opening pages. I will first address their relation to existing literature and, second, address some of the questions and problems that emerged in the field studies. Field Study I focused on identity research and explored how German women learn to relate to the Holocaust topic. Field Study II focused on action research in education and explored the educational value of visiting a former concentration-camp. Field Study III focused on moments of transformation which occurred in exchange programs among third generation German participants.

Empirical Studies to Amplify Existing Literature

Informed by Jane M. Menten, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Mary Elizabeth Moore and Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen,¹⁹ I will identify some assumptions and goals

¹⁹Jane M. Menten, "Muddy Boots and Grubby Hands: An Introduction to Qualitative Research," course paper, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, Calif., May 1997; Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, En La Lucha: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology

influencing the selection of my samples, data description, analysis and interpretation. I am aware of the difficulty of studying in the United States for five years and then attempting to develop directions for religious educational practices in Germany. By presenting the empirical data at the beginning of the dissertation as a departure-point, I try to thwart the temptation to impose naive "shoulds" from a distant continent to the German situation. In order to take seriously the perspective and self-understanding of women currently living in Germany, I have chosen three samples of women in the second and third generations.

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz affirms the approach of ethnography which acknowledges the particularity of elements in a culture and does not fit them into general classifications. Chapters 3 and 4 will present some of the published research which shaped the scholarly discussion. However, in the spirit of ethnography, the data of Field Studies I, II, and III are intended to broaden, differentiate, and illumine the literature review in relation to the specific purpose of this dissertation, namely to explore how German women are relating to the Holocaust.

Discerning Insights, Questions and Problems

According to Robert C. Bogden and Sari Knopp Biklen, qualitative research is concerned with the participants' perspectives on meaning, how they interpret their lives. Despite much reading of published research, I will pay careful attention to how participants in Field Studies I, II, and III understand their situation and life. Max Weber's sociological approach and Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology influence that

(Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993), 63-79; Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, "Teach us to Teach: Ethnic Congregations Teaching Through Their Stories," unpublished manuscript, Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, Calif., April 1986; Robert C. Bogden and Sari Knopp Biklen, Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1992), 29-57.

endeavor; they urge researchers and theorists to understand, *verstehen*, and to acknowledge that they do not know already what particular things mean to the participants of their research. In this dissertation, the situation is particularly vulnerable to these problems. In the United States, very few research studies on the Holocaust focus on the German people as perpetrators.²⁰ Research in the United States has been concerned with, and shaped by, the unfathomable pain of victims, whose voices have been more spoken and readily heard in North America. In trying to encounter the "perpetrator side," however, German people have to overcome barriers, including misunderstandings about what "understanding" actually is. For example, trying to understand is sometimes naively equated with affirming another, and ignoring one's own moral stance. The political psychologist Thea Bauriedl highlighted this important distinction in her comments on Lore Walb's personal confrontation with her diaries written during 1933-1945. Bauriedl says, "*Verstehen muss nicht bedeuten, einverstanden zu sein.*" (Understanding does not mean to agree.)²¹ To equate understanding with agreeing is dangerous because it helps to avoid the perpetrator's perspective. But facing the Holocaust means searching for what can be learned from the perpetrator heritage; therefore, it is necessary to understand that perspective also. Otherwise, we will not develop forces which "strengthen our personal and collective immune system against repetitions."²²

²⁰Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (New York: HarperCollins, 1992) ; Robert Jay Lifton, The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Dan Bar-On, Legacy of Silence: Encounters with Children of the Third Reich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Claudia Koonz, Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

²¹Lore Walb, Ich, die Alte - Ich, die Junge: Konfrontation mit meinen Tagebüchern, 1933-1945 (I, the old - I, the young: confrontation with my diaries, 1933-1945) (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1997), 353.

²²*Ibid.*, 353.

Another ethnographic principle illuminates the complex relationship between the researcher and her informants. With many women in Sample I, I have an ongoing friendship. As a feminist, I do not want to dismiss this relational dimension. My role as a researcher will be twofold: insider and outsider. I am an insider in terms of being German, woman, Christian and, therefore, understanding the community from within. I am an outsider in terms of having studied abroad for almost five years, having had the opportunity to encounter Jewish people as friends, having been exposed to Holocaust studies in the North American context, and having listened to the experiences of other German women.

Methods of Author's Field Studies

I turn now to the purpose and structure of the three field studies. Each study engaged a different sample of German women, living in Germany. Each study employed a somewhat different method and focused on different research goals in order to illumine complementary aspects of the thesis, namely, identity, education, and transformation.

Field Study I: Identity Research

By means of a written questionnaire, I interviewed 33 women affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and who ranged in age between 25 and 55 years. Except for two women, they are all living in Württemberg, in southwestern Germany.

Field Study II: Action Research in Education

This study did a pedagogical evaluation of a visit to a former concentration-camp. All of the 31 women interviewed are employed as *Dorfhelferinnen* (domestic engineers in rural areas). Thirty-one women participated in an educational field trip to Bergen-Belsen; of these, 31 women responded to the first set of questions and 29 women responded to the second set of questions. One questionnaire was given before, and one after, their visit in Bergen-Belsen. The women's ages ranged between 23 and 60 years.

Field Study III: Research on Moments of Transformation.

This study analyzed and interpreted the written documentation of four summer exchange programs where young American Jews and German students traveled together for four weeks and confronted the Holocaust. I focused on the statements of young German non-Jewish women and their specific experiences.

Definitions

This section defines some key terms employed in the dissertation. Main issues related to these definitions are also introduced.

The first generation is persons who lived or came to age during the Third Reich as adults and thus were in one way or another involved as bystanders, perpetrators, resisters, accomplices, and fellow travelers (*Mitläufer*). The second generation is generally understood as those people who were very young during the Third Reich or born within 20 years thereafter. These people were influenced by the silence of their parents' generation. The third generation includes the people born after 1965; they are "distant enough in time from the Holocaust to not be paralyzed by it yet close enough to be emotionally attached to its memory."²³

Writing this paper in a USA context, I will use the term "national identity," applying it to non-Jewish German citizens currently living in Germany or elsewhere. The term "national identity" in German context cannot be used without an explanatory remark since it has had a rather conservative connotation. After the reunification, a new discussion on national identity arose. In the context of German versus Jewish identity, the term national identity is used to speak of non-Jewish Germans, who themselves or their parents/grandparents lived during the Third Reich as German citizens. From an intra-German perspective, "collective identity" would be the more appropriate term. On the

²³Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation: Encounters between Young Jews and Germans, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 18.

other hand, regarding one's identity in the context of other nations, "national identity" seems more appropriate.

Mittäterschaft is the German term coined by Christina Thürmer-Rohr. The literal translation would be the English noun for co-perpetrating. *Mittäterschaft* acknowledges women's liability in maintaining patriarchal and oppressive structures, and more specifically the Third Reich with its criminal regime. I will use the German term in italics since it has become known in German speaking countries through Thürmer-Rohr's work.

The distinction between public and private space is building on the Western classical tradition and offers a theoretical framework to reflect on public and private discourse. Although the public and private distinction is often dichotomized, the emphasis of the dissertation will be on the mutual influence, dynamic and movement between the two. Public space refers to those acts, statements and processes which represent a large community at a highly visible place and are accessible by representatives of that larger community. Private space refers to those activities and processes which occur between individuals and small communities and are not directly accessible by the broader public.

Scope and Limitations of the Dissertation

The focus of this dissertation leads naturally to limitations regarding what is not considered in detail. The first limitation is a focus on the present moment in time. I will thus, draw largely on current research, which is especially needful since longitudinal research is not yet available. Further, the work will point to the future, but not project fully. The two tasks of identity formation and encountering the other are deeply interwoven and necessary building blocks for bridging the past to the future. My work will primarily focus on reconciliation work in regard to the past and present, although it is intended to foster interreligious dialogue for the future.

The second limitation of this dissertation will be the lack of discussion with post-structuralist thinkers in regard to the meaning of historical events and the importance of

moral values. Many younger feminist scholars are attracted to poststructuralist concepts. Since this dissertation is intended to foster educational and intergenerational dialogue, the poststructuralist work needs to be considered in the future; it will provide a bridge to important dialogue.

The third is the target group of the three field studies and the envisioned audience for the proposal in Chapter 8; my focal point is women. I do not deny that some men might have similar experiences but, for purposes of this work, I will draw primarily from women's experience and envision women as the teaching and learning community. For decades, male scholars paid attention only to male survivors and male perpetrators, which caused a serious lack of scholarship regarding women. Additionally, women bring particular perspectives to the table out of their unique experience of oppression in patriarchy and offer gifts towards working for *tikkun olam*.²⁴

Finally, I am writing from a west-German perspective. Some east-German voices are included among the interviewees in Field Study I and Field Study III, but the majority of the utilized published research does not differentiate between west- and east-German realities in education, church situations, and women's movements. That work is also needed in the future.

Design and Flow of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, the three original field studies will be presented in order to frame critical questions and possibilities in post-Holocaust education with women. In Chapter 3, the reader will receive an introduction to the public discourse on the Holocaust that has taken place in Germany during the past decades. Historical landmarks and dilemmas of public discourse will be outlined, thus providing a societal frame for the following chapters, which will primarily identify dynamics in the private discourse. Dilemmas that

²⁴*Tikkun olam* is the Hebrew word and Jewish concept of participating in mending the world as the divine vocation for humans.

beset people in the struggle with their national identity will become more apparent. Chapter 4 turns to five major publications illuminating the current psychological situation for Germans in regard to the Holocaust heritage. In Chapter 5, the intersection of Holocaust studies and women studies will be explored. This chapter will provide insights regarding women's gender identity in the context of knowing both victim and victimizer experiences. In Chapter 6, issues will be addressed which emerge when Christians seek to face the Holocaust. Proposals for a post-Shoah spirituality will respond to these issues and correspond to transformations of people's religious identity. In Chapter 7, options for building connections despite a separating past will be explored. Finally, in Chapter 8, relational movements of education will be developed. Those movements will function like didactic principles on which to base religious education in a post-Holocaust context. They are intended to foster the formation of an integrated identity in German Christian women, who live with that heritage and with subsequent realities. Chapter 9 is a summary and projection for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Three Field Studies

This work begins with the voices of women, and with the effort to understand their experiences, concerns, and ways of learning in regard to the Holocaust and its heritage. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to present Field Studies I, II, and III for that very purpose, emphasizing their importance for the following chapters. The chapter begins with an introduction to each field study, describing the purpose and sample selection. Then follows the presentation of each field study, with its most prominent results in regard to descriptive data and some interpretive discussion. The concluding section of this chapter will address questions and problems which emerge from the three studies. The reader will find more detailed information about each study in Appendices A, B, and C.

Introduction to Field Studies I, II, and III

Field Study I: Identity Research

This study is an attempt to identify how women of the second and third generations following the Holocaust currently relate to that phenomenon, and what meaning the Holocaust heritage carries in regard to their national, religious, and gender identity. This study involved a questionnaire, which invited the women to reflect on their own experiences.

The initial strength of Sample I is that I knew most of the women as former fellow students, colleagues, friends, or volunteers in various church related agencies. There are two positive results: they agreed to deal with the questionnaire and sent it back on time; and they agreed to deal with the topic with seriousness because most of them knew about my interest in the topic and struggle with it. The underside is that subjective factors are magnified; critically analyzing statements made by friends is more challenging than analyzing anonymous responses. These voices are also not adequately representative, for

disciplined sampling procedures were not used in selecting the sample. On the other hand, the professions, ages, and church relations of the women in Sample I do represent a cross-section of the critical reflective perspective within the church in Württemberg.

Additionally, most of the women pursued more formal education than the women in Sample II and thus might be more comfortable with reflecting on existential issues.

Field Study II: Action Research

Field Study II is action research, exploring the educational contribution of visiting a memorial site. Particular attention is given to the influence of such a visit in comparison with other means of teaching (such as public school curriculum, literature, traveling abroad, or encounter with survivors). In regard to Sample II, I did not know the individual participants; I was familiar with the church institution and the Director who organized the educational field trip. The women of Sample II are relatively young and involved in caregiving activities at the local level; they can be considered to be representative of the Protestant church milieu in Württemberg.

Building on the principle of dialogic relationship between the researcher and the research participants, the attempt here is to enter an open-minded dialogue in a horizontal relationship between equals.¹ This study attempts to listen carefully as much as possible to the words of the subjects (Sample I and Sample III), thus emphasizing that these women first have to teach the researcher their experiences and their perspectives, before the researcher can draw conclusions and develop educational guidelines.

Field Study III: Action Research

This action research analyzes written documentation of four international exchange programs where young American Jews and Germans faced the Holocaust together. Field Study III is an attempt to identify and understand moments of transformation experienced

¹Isasi-Diaz, 71.

by young people of the third generation, especially as they try to come to terms with the heritage of a perpetrator nation.

Sample III is different from the other two. The subjects are known only through their writing; thus, analysis is based on the women's written documentation. My own personal communication with Björn Krondorfer, Co-director of the exchange programs, did broaden my understanding and allowed me to include some additional critical reflections in my analysis. In particular, this sample illustrates that knowing the "culture of community" is decisive in order to understand the participants more fully. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz points to the value of ethnography as coming to know people by "watching [them] people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, in their own terms."²

Making an effort to unravel the German perpetrator context is somewhat difficult because of the moral assumption in public discourse that collective silence is wrong and must be interrupted. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz's approach is different. She takes a partisan stand on behalf of marginalized women, that is, women who are traditionally neglected; thus, she is using a method of ethnography that affirms, first and foremost, their culture of community. Women's voices in post-war Germany were also neglected. These field studies attempt to attend to the women's mixed heritage as victim and victimizer.

Jane Menten points to a shift in anthropological analysis "away from a focus on behavior and social structures toward the study of symbols, meaning, and mentality."³ At this point, Mary Elizabeth Moore's work in ethnographic studies with congregations becomes very helpful. Her method of analysis seems to build on this shift toward symbols and meanings by seeking and interpreting "common words and phrases, themes, definitions of faith, accounts of faith formation, symbols, patterns of interaction, and actions or

²Ibid., 65.

³Menten, 13.

activities."⁴ In my analysis, I will search for themes which were addressed (Sample I and III), emotional responses (Sample III), and symbols as moments of transformation (Sample III).

Presentation of Field Studies I, II, and III

Each study will be presented in four steps: description of relevant data, followed by a selection from the analytical and interpretive discussion. At the end of each presentation, conclusions will address questions and further problems which arose.

FIELD STUDY I: Research on Identity Formation

I had hoped to find traces and hints of how women became willing to approach the Holocaust theme. The written questionnaire posed eight questions to which 33 women responded. Appendix A includes all responses in English translation. The following results were arrived at after a three step process of describing, analyzing, and then interpreting the data. Because of space limitation and the flow of thoughts, here I will focus less on descriptive and more on interpretive results. A few examples illustrate the descriptive part.

Description of the women who responded:

Thirty-two women work in social fields, 20 women are employed by church related agencies or institutions. At least 14 women have a formal theological education.

Questions in Overview:

Below are seven questions, which were printed on two pages, with spaces to write the answer under each question. Several women enclosed additional pages of reflection with their questionnaires.

1. Kannst Du Dich an Orte- Situationen - Begegnungen erinnern, in denen Du mit dem Holocaust in Berührung kamst oder aufgestört wurdest? (Can you recall places-situations-encounters where you were touched or troubled by the Holocaust?)

⁴Mary Elizabeth Moore, "Teach us to Teach," 24.

2. Wenn Du Deine eigene Familien- und Lebensgeschichte überdenkst, kannst Du heikle Bereiche im Blick auf den Holocaust ausmachen? (Reflecting on your family's and your own history - can you identify sensitive spots in regard to the Holocaust?)
3. Was hat Dich bewogen, Dich mit den Folgen des Holocausts zu beschäftigen? (What impelled you to deal with the consequences of the Holocaust?)
4. Hastest Du jemals Begegnungen mit jüdischen Menschen oder Nachkommen von anderen Überlebenden? (Have you ever had personal encounters with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors?)
5. Gibt es bestimmte Anliegen, die Du als Frau hervorheben möchtest? (As a woman, are there specific concerns you would like to highlight?)
6. Siehst Du als Christin eine besondere Notwendigkeit sich mit dem Holocaust zu beschäftigen? (As a Christian, do you see a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust?)
7. (Inwiefern) Ist Deine deutsche Identität wichtig im Blick auf den Holocaust? (As a German, (how) is your national identity significant in regard to the Holocaust?)

In the following section, I will address each of the questions by describing briefly the results and then discussing some of the relevant findings.

Q1: Can you recall places-situations-encounters where you were touched or troubled by the Holocaust?

In Q1, the women reflected on places and situations where they were touched or troubled by the Holocaust. As demonstrated by the responses to multiple-choice questions, 34 times women visited a memorial site, and, more specifically, 20 times a former concentration camp was named. Out of 33 women, 28 women identify formal school education as the place where they encountered the Holocaust topic in a troubling or touching way. Next in the ranking is watching movies (19) as a means to encounter the topic. Seventeen times reading books and listening to lectures was named, as an intellectual approach. For 16 women, encounters abroad were crucial, in particular

encounters in Israel (10 times) and more specifically visiting Yad Vashem, the Israeli national Holocaust memorial. Lowest among all the places and situations indicated were personal encounters with only six scores.

In sum: memorial site, school education, movies, intellectual approach and encounters abroad seem to embody symbols where women connected with the past. The scores suggest that visiting a memorial site, in particular a former concentration camp, presents a very commonly acknowledged symbol of dealing with the past (34, plus 6xYad Vashem = 40). "Personal encounters" seemed the lowest in self-conscious influence (6). Three of these encounters reflect the victim perspective; the other three relate to the perpetrator heritage. My wording did not suggest preference for one specific perspective; therefore, it is quite remarkable that only three responses refer to the victim side whereas, in Q 2, reference was made only twice to the victim side (Jewish and communist relatives).

The data suggest that these women had been touched and troubled by phenomena that focused on the victims' suffering (memorial sites, movies, books and probably the upper history classes). Regarding school education, the questionnaires do not clearly indicate whether the teachers of these women had taught "relational skills," favored a cognitive approach, or evoked emotionally disturbing experiences.⁵ Nevertheless, school education always involves an intellectual approach to some degree, and if we compute the number of times formal school education is named as an influence, and the number of times "intellectual approach" such as lectures and book reading were named, we end up with 45 in total, the highest influence of all. As described above, however, "personal encounters" were named as strong influences only six times; this may suggest minimal influence

⁵Gertrud Hardtmann presents material which manifests the inability of many teachers to relate to students' emotional preconditioning. See Chapter 4 for further elaboration.

through relationships. On the other hand, 15 women said in Q4 that they never had a personal encounter with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors. There seems to be a huge lack of relational experiences per se. How are women of the second and third generation supposed to acquire such skills?

Q2: Reflecting on your family's and your own history - can you identify sensitive spots in regard to the Holocaust?

In Q2, the women reflected on their family's and their own history in order to identify sensitive spots in regard to the Holocaust. In listing the responses (see Appendix A), I assigned them to the person who was primarily indicated, such as mother (4 times), father (3 times), parents (3 times), grandparents (10 times), "not talked about/not a delicate issue" (10 times), one's own history (7 times).

In analyzing the responses, I used Mary Elizabeth Moore's method and searched for central words, activities, and symbols in order to filter out themes. Repeatedly, the following themes emerged in the women's responses regarding sensitive spots: war and post-war experiences; prejudices and anti-Semitic remarks; confessions of not knowing or knowing little about the Holocaust; the sharing of another family member; judgments such as being called a Nazi or denounced; lies and denial. The emotional dimension was revealed in statements such as: "Mom was shocked that I dared to ask my grandparents," or "grandmother was reluctant to respond but grandfather was curious and wanted to know what the teacher had told us."

These themes indicate that major encounters took place through communication (talking, telling, questioning, inquiring). Most responses stem from the first or second generation and thus reflect their (in-) ability to relate to the Holocaust topic in the presence of family members of a subsequent generation. This can be interpreted in terms of a theme

centered interaction (TCI).⁶ Among family members, the theme (Holocaust) and the group (family) seem to move between actions of excluding and careful opening, sharing and defending, conveying predetermined statements and opening the process (for instance changing one's mind). Sometimes it was not clear whether the women were reporting direct statements of their conversation partners or giving more of their interpretations. In any case, the responses were selected and formulated from the respondents' perspectives, and thus their understanding and perception shapes the fragments of communication. For instance, reporting on anti-Semitic remarks or comments seems to embody judgments of the daughters or granddaughters toward their families. Therefore, religious educational guidelines will have to include ways for women, as moral selves, to deal with the secluded or carefully censored topic "Holocaust" in the intergenerational context.

Looking back to data results from Q1, only one person mentioned that family was the place where she encountered the topic "Holocaust" in a moving or troubling way. Why is that? The few emotional references might shed some light on that issue.

The expressed emotional dimensions contain scarcely anything encouraging. Quite the opposite: feelings of awkwardness, touching taboos, regret and annoyance were expressed by the women. Their parents and grandparents responded to their questions with shock, reluctance, silence and curiosity, revealing a desire to control and defend. The women observed shame and low self-esteem among relatives who were excluded from family conversations.

The previously mentioned emphasis on communication seems to be shadowed by inhibiting emotions. In such an emotional context, who ever wants to deal with such a burdened topic? The task of learning to 'relate' to the Holocaust seems in this context to have been shaped for decades by emotional obstacles. Family is the place where skills to

⁶TCI, or theme centered interaction, is a therapeutic method developed by Ruth Cohen.

develop and foster relationships are decisively shaped. If families, in most cases, have difficulty in teaching skills for relating to the Holocaust; what additional teaching is necessary to overcome the family formation and to provide moments of relational teaching?

Q3: What impelled you to deal with the consequences of the Holocaust?

Q3 asked the interviewees what impelled them to deal with the heritage of the Holocaust. Their repeatedly stated words or phrases were used as categories to structure and list all the individual responses. "Other people put me in a learning situation" was the highest ranking influence named, with 13 scores. This data amplifies the responses to Q1, suggesting that relationships are very prominent influences, but within larger learning situations. "Emotional reaction" was expressed 12 times; with one exception, all of these emotions refer to shock, shame, consternation, embarrassment. "Felt responsibility" was named 9 times. This last response suggests that the respondent has dealt with the Holocaust already in one way or another; "responsibility" is usually a response to something one has faced and by which one was challenged. "Discovering connection to other events" was named 8 times, pointing to other historical situations of injustice, or an awareness of a current political situation or effects of that past on present events. "No involvement" was admitted by four women, and two of these clearly expressed reluctance toward the assumed expectation that they might feel responsible.

These categories indicate that there is more than one general way to engage the Holocaust heritage. Three prominent ways were named in this research: Participating with others in teaching situations, experiencing and reflecting on emotions, and making connections with other historical situations. Even with the prominent themes, however, each teaching situation and emotional reaction looks different. I am wondering: where the women learned the lesson of "responsibility?"

Q4: Have you ever had personal encounters with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors?

In Q4 the interviewees were asked to reflect on encounters they might have had with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors. Fifteen women admit that they never (consciously) had an encounter with a survivor or descendant. Thirteen women encountered survivors or descendants of survivors in Germany. Besides Jewish people, Sinti and Roma, mentally ill people, and a father and grandfather were named. Eight women recalled encounters in Israel. Three women had encounters abroad beyond Israel (Poland, Holland, USA). In sum, almost 50% of the participating women never met a survivor or a descendant of a survivor. Eleven encounters took place abroad, almost as many as in Germany (13). Out of 33 women, only five responses (about three or four women) referred to those encounters as friendships or longer-lasting contacts.

These results are puzzling. On the one hand, the women recall clearly their brief encounters with survivors in clearly identified locations. On the other hand, only three or four women actually seized the chance to develop relationships as friends or colleagues in working situations. How can this lack of relational opportunities be lessened?

Q5: As a woman, are there specific concerns you would like to highlight?

In Q5 the women were questioned whether they would like to highlight specific concerns as women. Since some women wondered about this question, I added the handwritten comment in brackets: (for example, victim - perpetrator, feminist concerns). This note might have had an influence on their reflections. In listing their responses, I chose categories to represent themes the interviewees addressed. In numerical terms, the score rankings follow:

"No specific concern" was expressed by twelve women, more than 33%. "Women as accomplices" was addressed by twelve women. Four women specifically mentioned the brutality of women in the camps. Two further concerns relate to the respondents' growing awareness of women's involvement as accomplices and women's more subtle involvement in the context of daily life (hidden behind men), including their influence in education. "Women as victims" was referred to by ten women. Themes which were addressed included: questioning the victim role, seeking to understand relations with other victims, wishing for more information, and searching for contemporary implications. "Implications" was addressed by seven women, pointing to current social challenges such as xenophobia, racist climate. More specifically, women's opportunities for reconciliation were highlighted, but also the necessity of interrupting classic female strategies of not knowing. "Relating of women" was mentioned four times. "Women and resistance" was explicitly addressed once, and twice additionally in the context of other headings.

On the one hand, the high ranking of more than 33% of the interviewees not finding any specific concerns is quite surprising. On the other hand, this lack of awareness might mirror the overall slumbering awareness that women were involved in the regime of terror, as the literature review in Chapter 5 suggests. Looking closer into "women as accomplices," it seems that newer discussions on complicity and women in the church struggle, and even findings on women's brutality as wardens, are becoming more and more known. Looking closer at "women as victims," very differentiated aspects of women as victims appear. The identified themes (questioning the victim role, relating to other victims, lacking information, seeking implications) suggest that the interviewees can deal with a multi-faceted concept of victim. I did not find much evidence of claiming the victim role for themselves, and still less evidence of being attached to the victim role. The respondents' formulations rather suggest that the women understand the victim experience

as a departure point for further reflection or additional questioning such as addressing other victims and questioning the relation between victims and victimizers.

Even if there are 33% who see no specific concerns for women, there are some concrete implications for today's responsibility. These implications move from the more general "equal responsibility" to "not allowing oneself to be exploited by others" to "women's options for reconciliation" and "working together against xenophobia."

Q6: As a Christian, do you see a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust?

Q6 invited interviewees to reflect on a specific necessity of dealing with the Holocaust as a Christian. I categorized the answers according to the following themes which emerged: Out of 33, seven women were convinced that the Holocaust "is less a Christian issue," and more a human one. One interviewee said, "No, I never considered it because of faith reasons, but rather as a human issue." Nine women did "critical self-reflection on Christianity," for example, by rejecting Christianity's claim to be unique and superior. The "complicity of Christians" was addressed by ten comments, and seven further comments were "questioning the past and present Church." Five women pointed to "Christian teaching which suggests a different lesson," such as to respect the other, to respect the stranger. Arguments for "rethinking Christian-Jewish relations" were brought forth by eight comments, and 14 responses articulated "implications for the future," such as: "As a Christian I feel a special responsibility that Christianity can still be trusted."

We turn now to consider these themes. The first theme (a) is that the Holocaust is not a Christian issue. Those who did not see the Holocaust as a Christian issue seemed either to lack knowledge ("I didn't understand the context why. . .") or wanted to highlight it as a general human issue. I am wondering whether this emphasis on a general human issue is a reaction to a restrictive faith tradition, always emphasizing guilt in humans and particularly in women. Therefore, reframing the Holocaust as a general human issue

might broaden the perspective (in their view) and also allow cooperation with non-Christians.

The next categories are: (b) critical self-reflection; (c) complicity of Christians; and (d) questioning the past and present Church, especially in regard to Christian self-understanding, the institution of the church, and Christian praxis. Twenty-five comments refer to these three categories, a remarkable score if compared with Q5 (in which 12 comments expressed a self-critical reflection regarding "women as accomplices"). This high percentage might be due to the interviewees' involvement as church employees, diaconal ministers, pastors and social workers.

The fifth theme (f) is rethinking Christian-Jewish relations. I actually named this category "rethinking Christian-Jewish relations," although the responses suggest a more specific phrase "recalling Christian-Jewish historical connections." None of the interviewees actually suggested reaching out to Jewish people today. The reasons may be found in the very small number of Jewish congregations in Germany, and also in the related circumstances that very few women have ever met Jewish persons. (See Q4)

This leads to the final theme (g), implications for the future. The two comments which address future concerns, namely "that Christianity can still be trusted" and "to feel the options/abyss are possible in one's own life" seem close to the very complex heritage of the Holocaust for Christians. The questions might be stated starkly: Is Christianity still trustworthy; and how does one deal with one's own potential for evil (and goodness)? As an overall impression, Q6 evoked more comments than the other questions. This suggests the need for more attention to the concerns of this dissertation, namely, for Christians to deal with the Holocaust.

Q7: As a German, (how) is your national identity significant in regard to the Holocaust?

Q7 inquired whether the respondents' national identity as German matters in regard to the Holocaust. In listing the answers, I again employ categories that emerged from the data as themes. The women responded to this question by identifying specific tasks and various perspectives on German history and their relation to it.

The interviewees' references to specific tasks (first theme) can be equated with "implications" at other places in this study. Seventeen women (52%) apprehended a specific task for people of German nationality. The following themes were named: becoming sensitive to everyday situations, to current movements, to signs; feeling responsibility for preventing a recurrence; facing the perpetrator in oneself; reaching out to others; and dealing with the past.

A second theme is that several women saw themselves as an inseparable part of German history. Six comments address this opinion directly, and 8 additional comments under "specific task" and "national identity" refer to that also.

A third theme is the interviewees' strong emotions of guilt and shame. Measured numerically, Q7 evoked the strongest feelings. Responses to other questions also included emotional comments, but this question prompted a separate category. Eleven women expressed strong feelings, most of them shame, guilt and embarrassment. Two women expressed anger about reducing Germany to that part of history.

A fourth theme was that German identity does not have a special meaning. Five women did not find a specific correlation between their national identity and the Holocaust. They rejected or seemed unsure whether the Holocaust has something to do with being German. Two women would prefer that the Holocaust be considered as a general human failure.

The fifth theme indicated problems with one's national identity. In addition to the third theme of strong emotions, 11 women expressed also strong feelings towards their (lack of) national identity. One expressed the feeling that it "is split"; another asked "Am I

measured according to the German past?" Still another said, "I do not have a German identity."

Comparing Q5, Q6, and Q7, the following observations can be made:

Q5 (women's identity) evoked twelve "no" responses and 37 comments.

Q6 (Christian identity) evoked seven "no" responses and 52 comments.

Q7 (German identity) evoked five "no" responses and 45 comments.

According to these scores, the 33 responding women seem to be mostly challenged in regard to their Christian identity, since they wrote 52 comments with a great variety of aspects. Their German national identity allowed only five women to reject any special responsibility as Germans, the so-called "no" response. Twelve women saw no correlation between their identity as a woman and the Holocaust; thus, the women seemed less aware of gender issues stirred by the Holocaust than of Christian and German issues.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I will uplift and summarize problems and further questions which were unearthed in describing, analyzing, and interpreting the responses to the seven research questions. They lay out an agenda for the subsequent chapters.

Q1 The purpose of Q1 was to explore where the interviewees were touched or troubled by the Holocaust. The intellectual approach seemed to have played a major role and the relational approach played a minor one; most women received a more cognitive and general knowledge of the Holocaust. A question emerges: Why do German women have so few experiences with Jews, and how can relational skills be acquired or taught so that more relational experiences are possible? Furthermore, many encounters occurred abroad and shaped their awareness (Q 7). How can radical encounters in new contexts be included in religious educational practices in Germany?

Q2 The purpose of Q2 was to discover sensitive spots in the interviewees' family history. Results of Q2 suggest that, on one hand, there was a strong emphasis on

communication, such as talking, telling, questioning, inquiring. On the other hand, since only one person acknowledges her family as a place where she was touched by the Holocaust topic (Q1), communication hindrances were acquired and learned in the family. It seemed also that the emphasis on communication was overshadowed by inhibiting emotions. Three concluding questions can be named: In such an emotional context, who would want to deal with such a burdened topic? How can communication obstacles be overcome? In which way do ambiguous messages from the family of origin shape the perception of victims and perpetrators?

Q3 In Q3 the interviewees were asked what impelled them to deal with the heritage of the Holocaust. Their responses suggest that there are several influences and not just one general path to engage in the Holocaust topic. Three prominent ways to engage were named in this study: participating with others in teaching situations, experiencing and reflecting on emotions, and making connections with other historical situations. The next question then arises: Where do people learn to feel responsibility, given the understanding that responsibility is actually a reaction to a faced situation?

Q4 In Q4 the women were asked to reflect on encounters they might have had with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors. Fifteen women never had a (conscious) encounter with a survivor or descendant. Only three or four women were connected for a long time with a survivor or descendant. The problem arises again: How can the lack of relational opportunities be bridged?

Q5 In Q5 the interviewees were asked whether they would like to highlight specific concerns as women. More than 33% of the interviewees did not see any specific issue at stake for women in regard to the Holocaust. There seems to be a lack of knowledge how women's role contributed to the NS system and in which ways women maintained the generational silence dynamics. On the other hand, the identified insights regarding various aspects of victim roles appear to be a departure point for further reflection.

Q6 Q6 invited reflection on a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust as a Christian. This question prompted the most comments among the seven questions. But nevertheless, none of the women suggested reaching out to Jewish people. In light of Q4 – that very few women ever met Jews and even less ever had an ongoing relationship – it seems to be beyond imagination for most people to reach out to Jewish people. According to many of the responses, however, religious identity seems to play an important role regarding the Holocaust. In what ways can the strong interest that has been revealed in the responses be utilized for building relationships with existing Jewish faith communities?

Q7 Q7 inquired whether national identity as a German matters in regard to the Holocaust. Numerically, this question prompted the most expressed feelings. Only five women (compared with seven women in Q6 and 12 women in Q5) responded with "no" and rejected the idea or were not sure if they, as Germans, have a specific relation to the topic. Fifty-two % (the highest score among all questions) see a unique obligation to make some kind of response because of their national identity. These two noticeable reactions (shame/guilt and responsibility) suggest that, in regard to the Holocaust, the national identity matters most. But how is this awareness acquired? What does that mean for the "relational space" in which future education might take place?

FIELD STUDY II : Action Research in Education

Field Study II is action research, exploring the educational contribution of visiting a memorial site. First some general information on the sample will be provided, then, the memorial site Bergen-Belsen will be briefly introduced and the research results presented. The research results have been reached through a three step process of translating and describing the responses to two sets of questions, then analyzing and interpreting these findings. Some concluding questions will be addressed which emerged out of Field Study II. Appendix B lists all responses in English translation. In presenting the study results

here, I will focus less on descriptive and more on interpretive findings. A few examples will illustrate the descriptive part.

General Information on the Sample

In July 1998, during the course of one of their educational seminars, a group of 31 rural household engineers (*Dorfhelferinnen*) took a field trip to Northern Germany and visited the former concentration-camp Bergen-Belsen. All 31 women who visited Bergen-Belsen responded to the first set of questions before the visit; 29 women turned in the second set of questions after the visit of Bergen-Belsen.

The women of this sample were trained to work in rural families. In case of parental sickness or other emergency, a farmer family can apply for such a *Dorfhelferin*, who will run the household, take care of the children and in some cases manage to run the farm for several weeks or months. The women in the field study did this kind of work, and they did not have higher education. The age range of the interviewees was broad. Two women were born in 1938, one woman was born in 1960, 26 women were born between 1965 and 1975, and two women were born in 1976. The average age was 29 years. Once a year, they have the option to attend a workshop or field trip as part of their ongoing education and as a welcomed opportunity to meet colleagues from all over the region. The director of the *Dorfhelferinnenwerk* (church commissioned agency on behalf of *Dorfhelferinnen*) has primarily a mentoring function for the *Dorfhelferinnen*.

An Overview on the Memorial Bergen-Belsen

In 1940, the *Wehrmacht* [German Army] had established a prisoner of war camp for 600 French and Belgian soldiers.⁷ From July 1941, an estimated 20.000 Soviet prisoners of war were kept there, in the open and under extremely cramped conditions. From March 1944, a separate section for sick prisoners from other concentration camps

⁷Information brochure of Niedersächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung. Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen 29303 Lohheide.

was established. From August 1944, female prisoners especially from Auschwitz-Birkenau arrived. From January 1945, tens of thousands of prisoners from concentration-camps close to the front were crammed into Bergen-Belsen which lead to extreme overcrowding and mass deaths. On April 15, 1945, British troops liberated the camp. All total (before and after liberation), about 50,000 concentration-camp inmates and 30-50,000 prisoners of war died in Bergen-Belsen. In 1966, a documentation center opened with an exhibition on the history of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.

Pre-Visit Questionnaire

Before the visit the following five questions were given to the group of people involved in the visit:

1. Dies wird mein erster (), zweiter (), dritter () Besuch in einem KZ/Gedenkstätte des Holocausts sein. (This will be my x visit to a concentration-camp/memorial site of the Holocaust.)
2. Sich als jüngerer Mensch mit den Verbrechen des Nationalsozialismus auseinandersetzen finde ich: nicht so wichtig (), ist mir egal (), finde ich gut (), finde ich sehr wichtig (). (A young person should face the atrocities of the National Socialism; I think: that is not so important (); that does not bother me (); that is good (); that is very important ().)
3. Was ich bisher über den Holocaust weiss, kenne ich () aus der Schule, () aus Filmen (. . .), () aus Erzählungen von Grosseltern oder anderen ZeitzeugInnen, () aus Büchern, die ich mir aussuchte, () aus öffentlichen Diskussionen und Reden von Politikern, () aus Gesprächen und Diskussionen mit FreundInnen/ Kolleginnen.
(What I know already about the Holocaust I learned through . . . () Public school; () film & movies; () stories told by grandparents or other contemporaries; () books which I chose; () conversations and discussions with friends and colleagues; () public discussion and speeches of politicians.)

4. Mir ist ein wenig mulmig vor dem Besuch in Bergen Belsen: Ja (A) Nein (B)

A. mir ist ein wenig mulmig: weil ich nicht weiss, was auf mich zukommt (); weil Leid und Unrecht mir leicht unter die Haut gehen (); weil das so schwierige Fragen aufwerfen kann ();

(I feel a little awkward before the visit to Bergen-Belsen: Yes (A) No (B)

A. I feel a little awkward because. . .

I do not know what will be in store for me (); suffering and injustice easily gets under my skin (); [the visit] can stir up difficult questions ().)

B. Mir ist nicht mulmig vor dem Besuch dort: weil ich das schon kenne (); weil ich glücklicherweise eine dicke Haut habe (); weil ich mich nicht zu detailliert damit befassen werde ();

B. I do not feel awkward before the visit because

I know it already (); fortunately I have a "thick skin" (); I will not pay too much attention [to the Holocaust] (); . . .

5. In meiner Familie wurde das Thema Holocaust () offen besprochen; ab und zu gestreift (); ängstlich vermieden (); kam nie vor (). (In my family the topic Holocaust . . . () was discussed openly; () sometimes touched on; () anxiously avoided; () never appeared.)

We turn now to the participants' responses to this pre-visit questionnaire.

Q 1 had asked how often the interviewees visited a memorial site. Quite a high number of women had previously visited a memorial site at least once. Out of 31 women, 24 women had already visited a concentration-camp. For 15 women it was already their 3rd or 4th visit. Only 7 women were visiting a site for the first time. What impact did it have on them? According to the scores of Q4, only four women felt comfortable because of previous visits and were aware of how they would feel.

Q 2 inquired whether they consider it to be important for young people to deal with the atrocities of the National Socialism. With one exception, each woman affirmed the necessity to face the atrocities of National Socialism. On a theoretical level, they had gained the insight that educational leaders wanted them to learn in post-war Germany. On a cognitive level, they knew what was important. But what about other dimensions of one's awareness and involvement with the topic? Is it possible to retrieve from the questionnaire some insight into their emotional and moral understanding? See Q4.

Q 3 had inquired about avenues from which the interviewees had received their knowledge on the Holocaust. Apparently, mandatory school education conveyed some kind of knowledge for almost everyone. Twenty-seven women remember some kind of Holocaust teaching in school. This kind of study does not allow a conclusion regarding the lasting impact of their school education. In Chapter 4, Gertrud Hartmann's work will be used to present the issue of traumatic school teaching. Björn Krondorfer and women from Study I address the problem of teaching information but not teaching how to relate to the Nazi past. Twenty-three women in this field study also mentioned films/movies as a source of knowledge on Holocaust. Eighteen women recalled narratives by grandparents and contemporaries. Note: I wonder if the responding women really referred to reports on the Holocaust or rather recalled reports on war experiences and National Socialism in general.

Fourteen women marked books which they have chosen to read. This means that they had a particular interest, especially since they do not belong to a group of the population who reads frequently. Regarding the lowest scores (only five) on "public discussion and speeches of politicians," the issue arises whether these scores indicate a gender specific perception of public discourse as a source of knowledge. These women seemed to have a very loose connection to the public discourse. In contrast, the literature review in Chapter 3 reveals a strong tradition of public discourse dealing with the Holocaust and shaping the public ethos decisively (according to Björn Krondorfer.) The

data of Field Study II suggest that there might be gender specific differences regarding the degree to which people are impacted by the public discourse.

Q 4A explored reasons for participants' feeling awkward in visiting a former concentration-camp.. An overwhelming majority of women (27 of 31) felt somewhat uneasy about going to Bergen-Belsen. Nineteen women felt awkwardness because "suffering and injustice easily gets under my skin." For most women there was an emotional response to visiting a former concentration-camp.

Q 4B had explored reasons for their not feeling awkward in visiting a former concentration-camp. Looking at the four responses of those who did not feel awkward, I interpret their statements as implying that they have dealt with the topic extensively, and thus they seemed no longer frightened of the emotional impact. Still, their rationales indicate that they had wrestled with emotional dimensions in the past. Does that mean they acquired a skill that helped them relate to the Holocaust constructively? The following observation makes me hesitate to affirm that question: Q3 (after the visit) inquires about one's feelings as a German in Bergen-Belsen in comparison to a Norwegian woman. Out of 29 women, only six women could imagine that a Norwegian woman felt differently. And only 6 women indicated that they felt uncomfortable to visit the concentration camp as a German. To me, this indicates that they did not yet discover any relation between the Holocaust and their own national identity.

Although, on the other hand, the woman who had traveled to Israel and "worked through some stuff already" concludes [in her response to Q1 after the visit]: "I observe again and again that we human beings can easily be tempted in the same way today as they were 50 years ago." That means she was able to compare moral implications from that time to our time. She even uses the inclusive "we."

Q 5 had asked whether Holocaust was talked about in their family. Twenty-five women out of 31 in field study II recall conversations at home. That appears to be quite

high, and in contrast to Research Study I where only two women out of 33 make a reference to their family in response to Q1 ("places where you were touched/troubled by the Holocaust"). Perhaps the women in field study II remember conversations on National Socialism and did not pay careful attention to my choice of words. Six women were aware that the topic was never addressed at home.

Is this result applicable to the general observation that there is more talk between the second and third generation than between the first and second generation? Does this result reflect an increase in conversation? Even in 1988, Heimannsberg and Schmidt acknowledged that "a widespread symptomatic pattern today is the silence within families."⁸ Ten years later, there may be less silence on the issue, likely due to many public events remembering the 50th anniversary of the collapse of the Third Reich (1995) and the strong media attention to Goldhagen's book⁹ in Germany. This may have contributed to a shift; however, additional research would be required to verify that general observation.

Post-Visit Questionnaire.

We turn now to the questions addressed to the interviewees after the visit in Bergen-Belsen, and then to their responses.

Q1. Ich empfand den Nachmittag als . . . überflüssig (), informativ (), aufwühlend (), bedrückend (), beschämend (), machte mich wütend (), etwas langweilig () weil . . . (I felt the afternoon . . . has been superfluous (); has been informative (); has been depressing (); has been unsettling (); made me feel ashamed (); made me angry (); was a little bit boring (); because . . .).

⁸Barbara Heimannsberg and Christof J. Schmidt, "Psychological Symptoms of the Nazi Heritage: Introduction to the German Edition," in The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame, trans. Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 3.

⁹Daniel Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1996).

Q2. Nach dem Besuch der Gedenkstätte find ich es wichtig (), unnötig (), sich als jüngerer Mensch so etwas anzusehen. (After the visit to the memorial site I find it . . . important (), unnecessary (), to visit something like that as a young person.)

Q3. War es für Sie unangenehm, das KZ als Deutsche zu besuchen? Ja () Nein ().
Hätte es beispielsweise eine Norwegerin ähnlich empfinden können? Ja (), nein ().
(Was it uncomfortable for you to visit the concentration camp as a German?
Can you imagine that a Norwegian woman felt the same way? Yes/No)

Q4. Aufgrund der Eindrücke dieses Nachmittags werde ich vermutlich
() FreundInnen davon erzählen, () erstmal in Ruhe darüber nachdenken, () mir noch ein Buch besorgen und mehr darüber lesen, () versuchen, mich auf das Nächste zu konzentrieren und Bergen-Belsen bald vergessen, () eine FreundIn ermutigen, ebenfalls eine Gedenkstätte zu besuchen. (Due to the impression of this afternoon I probably will . . . () Tell my friends about it; () first meditate for myself; () will get a book and read more about it; () try to focus on the next [item in my life] and forget Bergen-Belsen soon; () encourage a friend to visit also a memorial place.)

Q5. Für mich war heute Nachmittag am eindrucklichsten . . . (This afternoon I was mostly impressed by . . .)

Asked these questions, most of the women submitted the post-visit questionnaire, with informative results.

Q1 had explored their emotional response to the visit. Making multiple choices, 15 women marked "informative," 14 women felt "depressing," 11 women were "unsettled," six women marked "ashamed," two women were angry, one was a little bored, and none thought the visit was superfluous. Additional handwritten remarks came from 22 women, such as: "I realized again what humans are capable of and [they] can do it again."

Although all women had some degree of information before visiting Bergen-Belsen, the desire for more information seems apparent. What function does information

have? Does it provide access to a difficult topic? Does it provide distraction from a personal approach? Does information help persons become more open-minded or does information just feed the intellect? Marten Marquart and others point to the importance of learning **names** of people who were impacted by the Nazi regime as a kind of information which is connected to concrete lives of that time¹⁰.

Information seems to meet an educational value in the German society. The first group of Krondorfer's four exchange programs (Field Study III) demanded a historical approach to the Washington Holocaust museum instead of a victimization approach. They wanted to offer the "whole" history to American visitors. Does that precisely reflect the dilemma in German Holocaust education -- cognitive education -- which does not always teach how to integrate the facts of the Holocaust?

"Ashamed" was not a primary reaction to the atrocities. That contrasts with the dominance of "guilt" in German public discourse and with my own experience. I would have expected more shame reactions. What might be the reasons shame has not been a primary reaction? Do they feel themselves not involved in the German context? What creates an awareness of shame? My assumption is that the perspective of victims and the perspective of other nations contribute to an awareness of shame. It seems remarkable that "made me angry" was a reaction which was chosen only twice (Q1, after the visit). Is anger not a natural emotion after the heaviness and overwhelming impression of evil to which they were exposed?

Q2 inquired again whether young people should visit a memorial site. Visiting a memorial site seems to affirm a lesson Germans have somehow learned already: that it is

¹⁰Marten Marquart points out that remembrance requires names. See his essay, "Erinnerung: Fluch und Erlösung" 609. See also: Ilse Henneberg, ed., Vom Namen zur Nummer: Einlieferungsritual in Konzentrationslagern (From name to number: Committal ritual in concentration camps) (Bremen: Donat Verlag, 1996), 8.

important to confront the atrocities. Each of the visitors affirmed that it is important to visit a memorial site.

Q3 inquired about comfort with the visit. The responses revealed differences between a Norwegian and a German visitor. Six women felt uncomfortable, marking "yes" to feeling uncomfortable; 22 women responded "no." Sixteen women imagined that a Norwegian woman would feel the same way. Six women thought she would not feel the same way.

What struck me most was the fact that only six women could imagine that there might be a difference between the emotional responses of a German and a Norwegian to visiting a former German concentration-camp. Before reading the responses, Herta Leistner had expressed her assumption that their lack of national awareness may be connected to visiting a concentration-camp in Germany (versus Yad Vashem, Israel or USA).¹¹ The responses suggest that the women did not experience themselves as belonging to the perpetrator nation. They did not leave home and, thus, did not feel themselves as German, related to those who were the perpetrators. This observation is a very crucial point for my dissertation, namely the women's lack of awareness of what it means to be German in the context of the Holocaust.

These findings raise pedagogical questions: Which pedagogical means are instrumental to teaching awareness for one's national identity? Many Germans travel frequently to other countries, but primarily as tourists. Thus, they easily miss encountering "the other," and they do not learn about victims' perspectives on the Holocaust.

Q4 explored the prospective action of interviewees after the visit. Nineteen women prefer first to meditate for themselves, 12 women will tell their friends about it, 10 women

¹¹Dr. Herta Leistner, Outside Reader of this dissertation, is Director of the Protestant Churches' Women Research and Study Center in Gelnhausen near Frankfurt, Germany.

want to get a book and read more about it, 10 women will encourage a friend to visit a memorial place, and two women will focus on the next item in their life and forget Bergen-Belsen soon. Here one needs to note that the questionnaire did not offer the option to pursue more outgoing activities, such as joining a political initiative or a social activist group (such as Amnesty International.)

Q5 encouraged the interviewees to formulate some impressions after the visit. In their handwritten remarks, these visitors seemed mostly touched by two symbols of identification: how the dead corpses were treated (movie) and how the camera man provided the opportunity to look through his eyes and feel his discomfort.

At the bottom of the second questionnaire, the women were encouraged to mark their connection to religion/church: Fifteen out of 29 women responded. Thirteen women consider church/religion as an important part of their life. Two women marked a critical attitude; none indicated a loose connection to the church. As regards the other fourteen women, one might ask if the option "I do not care about church/religion" would have offered a better alternative to express their feelings. Since Germany is much more secularized than the USA, many people do not care about church; however, being employed by a church affiliated agency might suggest that the respondents hesitated to be outspoken about their actual attitude toward church/religion.

Conclusions

In these concluding sections, questions will be addressed which were unearthed by analysis and interpretation of the data findings. Those questions revolve around the following themes: national identity; emotional reactions; "success" of a memorial visit, and; ambiguity.

Integrating one's national identity. As the world becomes more and more a "global village," we have to integrate our nation's heritage in our own acting and communicating. Thus, for developing a mature identity, it is important not only to be aware of one's own

journey and the impact of one's family on one's journey, but also the meaning and heritage of one's nation. For these reasons, German women have to "train and sharpen their memory" in regard to their nation's past.¹² Field Study II raises questions about how that can be done. Certainly, a single visit to a concentration camp did not raise extensive questions regarding national identity, Christian identity, or gender identity. In comparison, Field Study III appears to be much more effective, where the students were exposed to Auschwitz for several days, had confrontations with the topic for several weeks, and also, traveled with a group of descendants of victims.

In Field Study II, the awareness of being German was addressed by the interviewees before they went to Bergen-Belsen (two remarks in Q4). The awareness of Christian identity was mentioned in Q5 after the visit, but in a totally detached way, confessing beliefs which seemed to be completely untouched by issues such as the theodicy. Questions of integration are raised by these responses.

Emotional reactions. Emotional reaction in itself may not contribute decisively to a deeper involvement. For example, one woman had been exposed four times to a concentration-camp and did not show any emotional reaction at all, nor did she make any comments on national identity. Considering the empirical research thus far, Field Study I revealed the values and limits of a strong cognitive approach, especially the serious lack of relational awareness. Field Study II questions the effectiveness of single visits, even if they occur several times. Emotional experience in itself does not seem sufficient to raise questions regarding one's identity.

Ambiguity. The women's contradictory answers concerning their emotional reactions, highlights the ambiguity involved in approaching the Holocaust event, and particularly, among those who "know it already."

¹²Marten Marquart, 601.

How to measure a "successful" visit? What could be considered a pedagogical "accomplishment" in visiting a memorial site? Taking moments of transformation from Field Study III as an option, the following objectives for a meaningful visit can be identified: Being emotionally moved; obtaining a glimpse of the victims' and perpetrators' perspective, and moving toward ethical implications. The scope of this research method did not include further investigation, so we turn to a third field study for illumination.

FIELD STUDY III: Research on Moments of Transformation

(1) Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation (1989), (2) The Third Generation after the Shoah (1991), (3) Living in a Post-Shoah World (1993), and (4) Living in a Post-Shoah World (1995)

Four opportunities for transformation (1-4) are documented in the stories of four international summer exchange programs where third generation German (mostly non-Jewish) and American (mostly Jewish) students spent four weeks traveling together, confronting the Holocaust.¹³ They visited places of Jewish life and culture in the USA, traveled to Germany to former Jewish sites and small existing Jewish communities, had

¹³Björn Krondorfer and Jon Schmidt, eds. A Journal of a German/American Student Exchange Program: Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation, July 31 - August 28, 1989, Dokumentation, no. 73 (Berlin: Evangelisches Bildungswerk Berlin-West, 1990); Christian Staffa and Björn Krondorfer, eds. The Third Generation after the Shoah. Between Remembering, Repressing and Commemorating. Attempts of a Common Time in Philadelphia, Berlin, Auschwitz. July 25 - August 22, 1991, Dokumentation no. 88. (Berlin: Evangelische Akademie Berlin-West, 1992); Christian Staffa, Björn Krondorfer, and Manfred Jurgovsky, eds. Living in a Post-Shoah World: Reflections of American, German, Jewish and Christian Students: 3rd Summerprogram on the Holocaust, July 21- August 19, 1993, Nach-Lese no. 5 (Berlin: Evangelische Akademie Berlin Brandenburg, 1994); Christian Staffa and Björn Krondorfer, eds. Living in a Post-Shoah World: Reflections of American, German, Jewish and Christian Students: 4th Summerprogram on the Holocaust, July 24 - August 16, 1995, Nach-Lese, no.1. (Berlin: Evangelische Akademie Berlin-Brandenburg, 1997).

encounters with Jewish and German families and survivors, and finally spent a few days in Auschwitz, Poland.

I am drawing from journal entries (1) and essays (2-4) which the students wrote after the program, reflecting on their trip. Since the emphasis of this dissertation is on German Christian women, analysis and interpretation of these documents includes only the voices of German, non-Jewish women. Each presentation will follow the sequence of first describing the respective group and its context, and then describing moments of transformation discerned from analysis and interpretation of their essays. The concluding section will name overarching themes and issues and, thus, lead to a comparative discussion of Field Study I and II.

Exchange Program 1989

This first group included 24 students from two distinct backgrounds: The American group embraced 12 students, most of them Jewish, but also one African-American person and one fundamentalist Christian, who dropped out after 12 days because the program was too liberal for her. She was also the only person ever to drop. The German group also had 12 students, mostly non-Jewish, including one woman from the Netherlands. The three moderators were from the USA (Björn Krondorfer, Ruth Laibson) and Germany (Jon Schmidt). Ruth Laibson from the Interfaith Council in Philadelphia had a mostly observational role. She writes in retrospect about "the distinct differences in how the Americans and the Germans, as groups, dealt with the significant questions...the Americans came to the program with an openness and a willingness to share their innermost feelings, while the Germans, as a group, were wary of authority figures and often unwilling to trust in the program itself."¹⁴

¹⁴Ruth Laibson, "In Retrospect," A Journal of A German/American Student Exchange Program: Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation, eds. Björn Krondorfer and Jon Schmidt (Berlin: Evangelisches Bildungswerk Berlin-West, 1990), 60.

In regard to the gender ratio, 17 participants were female and ten participants were male. The eight German female students are: Gisa, Kathrin, Annette, Lucia, Uta, Birgit, Gesche and Claudia. Since the last three persons did not send in their reflections for documentation, their voices will be missing.

The editors of the 1989 exchange program published journal entries from the various participants chronologically and identified the respective event or site the group had attended that particular day. In my analysis, those events or sites are referred to in italics. Sometimes one individual contributed several journal entries. Therefore the analysis pays attention to reflections regarding various events but authored by the same person. The journal entries from 1989 were written in English, not in the women's mother tongue. Documentation of 1991, 1993, and 1995 printed the essays in the writer's mother tongue and added on the same page the English or German translation.

We turn now to describe four moments of transformation which I identified in the 1989 journal entries of the five non-Jewish German women. The first moment of transformation occurred for Gisa when she spent Sabbath with a Jewish family in Philadelphia. She learned to realize what it means to live as a survivor. Gisa recognized that listening to a survivor gave her a glimpse of how hard this life must be. This eye-opening experience prepared her for a deeper understanding during a weekend stay in a survivor's family. She was able to recognize the tension and challenge in this family shaped by traumatic experiences during the Holocaust. She learned to appreciate the way the father could cope with the impact the *Shoah* still has on his life, without becoming overwhelmed by it.

The second moment of transformation occurred when Gisa attended a Christian worship and discussion afterwards. She became aware of anti-Semitic implications in a

sermon. The discussion after the sermon helped Gisa realize that she didn't notice the anti-Semitic underpinning. To listen to the sermon in a group of peers and learn about her peers' diversity of perspectives after the sermon raised her awareness and led to self-discovery about how indifferent she had been. Concerned about her own blindness, she expresses the wish to learn more about theology.

The third moment of transformation emerged for Lucia after she had encountered Jewish perspectives and suddenly saw her own country differently. For four weeks, Lucia had left her familiar environment whose conditions were taken as a given. She was exposed to other perspectives, learned to see 'through Jewish eyes' those who had suffered incredibly, and is now coming back home to the perpetrator country. She calls the deep emotional experience "shock," that the previously familiar now must be evaluated differently. Her own perception has changed dramatically.

The fourth moment of transformation happened during an encounter with Ignaz Bubis, the official representative of the Jewish community in Germany. Lucia discovered her own bias. For the first time, Lucia met Ignaz Bubis in Frankfurt and realizes that anti-Semitic clichés were also stored in her mind. She admitted her very first impression honestly and realized that her impression was nurtured by Jewish clichés she has had stored in herself.

Exchange Program 1991

This American/Jewish and East/West German student group was facilitated by Björn Krondorfer and Christian Staffa, with observer Ruth Laibson. Five Christian and five Jewish students from the USA, and five West-German and five East-German students traveled together for four weeks. This time, the group was smaller and they visited fewer sites to have more time for group processes. I will describe moments of transformation identified in writings of three non-Jewish German females: Barbara, Iris, and Miriam.

For Barbara a moment of transformation occurred when she made a painful discovery with her own language. Barbara listened to Eddie Gastfried, a Jewish survivor, and was touched by his sharing. In an atmosphere of openness, suddenly two language meanings were clashing painfully. The survivor was referring to the language of his perpetrators, which was the same language to which she was intimately tied, her mother tongue.

A second moment of transformation can be identified when Iris listened to survivor stories told by her Jewish peers. For Iris, they called into question German stories of personal affliction. Learning about the unimaginable suffering of the victims shed a new light on the more familiar German stories of personal affliction; in Iris' ears the German stories now sounded perverse and self-pitying.

When American and German group presented their family stories, a third moment of transformation occurred for Miriam. She discovered the degree to which the German group had dealt with the Holocaust. Observing the differences in the various family histories presented, Miriam became aware of the low level of reflection which the German group had previously engaged in dealing with the Holocaust.

Exchange Program 1993

The whole group in the 1993 exchange program was comprised of 20 college and university students from the United States and Germany. The American group consisted of six Jewish and four Christian students with diverse denominational affiliations (among them a Korean American). The German group included people from former East and West Germany (among them an immigrant from Afghanistan).

We turn now to describe moments of transformation identified in the writings of three German, non-Jewish women: Barbara, Bärbel and Claudia. A moment of transformation occurred when the whole group prepared together a commemoration ceremony in Auschwitz. Germans participated in the commemoration of Jewish victims

despite their perpetrator heritage. Barbara felt comfortable borrowing Israel's song of hope to find consolation in Auschwitz.

Another moment of transformation was enforced at the very beginning of the program. An American student expressed the assumption that all Germans are Nazis. Bärbel, having been confronted with that prejudice, became occupied with searching for "the other Germans" who had resisted. Bärbel mentioned that this statement was aimed at a deeper mentality, but still her way to deal with it was to find comfort in Germans who resisted. Did she escape the "deeper challenge?" At the end she hoped that her American peers would revise their initial hypothesis.

A third moment of transformation can be identified as discovering hope and trust in encounters with survivors. Claudia struggled with "birth as a burden." She felt the tension to have to go back to her country, the country of the perpetrators where riots continue to happen. She felt guilty when she does not speak out and when she does not act. She felt frustration, that it is so difficult to interrupt the silence in her home country. Survivors who expressed hope and trust in third generation Germans are actually the people who keep her going in a difficult Germany.

Exchange Program 1995

The 1995 group was comprised of ten American students and ten German students (among them East-and West Germans, and one living in Rumania). The facilitators were again Björn Krondorfer and Christian Staffa. Ruth Laibson functioned as an observer. They visited sites in Philadelphia, Berlin and Poland. The following section will describe moments of transformation identified in the writings of five non-Jewish German women: Kathrin A, Mandy, Katrin S, Elfi, and Susanne. Elfi's identity is that of a minority German since she was born and continues to live in Rumania.

One moment of transformation can be identified as meeting non-Germans with an east-German consciousness: seeing oneself on the perpetrator side. Kathrin, with an east-

German consciousness, was transformed by meeting non-Germans. Interactions in a group with non-Germans provided an outside perspective which helped Kathrin to see herself on the perpetrator side. As a former East-German, this presents an enormous shift in her perspective.

Another moment of transformation can be identified as writing and pondering journal entries: Discovering complex judgments among perpetrators across generations. Mandy pondered on her journal entry that "history doesn't repeat itself but sometimes it looks damn similar"; in light of that comment, Mandy concluded that she is not entitled to accuse her grandparents' generation. Accusations against the first generation and their involvement in the Holocaust were silenced by her own self-awareness that she might be judged similarly from the point of view of her grandchildren.

A third moment of transformation can be called encountering symbols of power: Becoming aware of the temptation of power. When Katrin S. passed the central tower at the entrance of the annihilation camp in Birkenau, she wished that the whole group had experienced the view from the watchtower. This symbol of power allowed her to gain insight into perpetrator feelings. Katrin S became afraid of her own feelings when she allowed herself to feel the temptation which comes with the position of superiority.

A fourth moment of transformation occurred in Elfi's situation, especially in speaking the German language as a minority in Rumania. The pain of clashing of language meanings was intensified. In a minority situation, language conveys identity. Facing Auschwitz, and learning to understand German as the perpetrator language, created speechlessness.

A fifth moment of transformation can be named as facing feelings of loss and sorrow for family members; people discovered that they needed to bear the ambivalence of family relations. Susanne recognized the ambivalent feelings inside her regarding her perpetrator grandfather; she wanted to love him and she condemned him at the same time.

A last moment of transformation is identified by Susanne's reflections on her inner journey to sign up and attend the exchange program. Susanne used an allegory to interpret her new awareness. She said that this is like giving birth to something new. She was convinced that this new awakened responsibility will not cease in her life. She learnt to understand that post-Holocaust responsibility will be a demanding place.

Conclusions

Conclusions to this section will regard all four exchange programs (1989, 1991, 1993, 1995). I will also formulate central insights upon which future work can build, as well as problems which need to be addressed.

- Learning to grasp the painful aftermath of the *Shoah* for survivors requires several levels of listening. In this case, lectures and spending time with a family offered participants an orientation.
- Uncovering one's own lack of insight is made possible through exposure to other perspectives and peer discussion.
- Gaining new understanding about one's home country is possible through learning to see through Jewish eyes, and uncovering hidden, silenced truth.
- Discovering unconscious clichés is brought about through direct encounter and honest self-perception, intensified through group conversation and internal conversation (as in journaling).
- The closeness of the perpetrator heritage gets personal when emotional bonding to one's mother tongue and openness to a survivor clash with one another.
- Stories can convey the difference and abyss between victims and victimizers.
- Sharing family stories can convey awareness of the degree to which people have confronted the Holocaust topic as descendants of the perpetrator community.
- Efforts to spend common time and endeavors for joint commemoration may be possible through invitation and individual identity awareness.

- Distorted perceptions can create obstacles in facing one's own ignorance. For example, German students are tempted to look for "good Germans," but also they ask how much burden can they bear?
- Learning to see clearly the difficult reality in Germany and, at the same time, being sustained by the hope/trust of survivors is an incredible gift! The real task lies within Germany.
- An outside perspective helps to locate a person in history with a particular heritage. Identity formation and responsibility are then possible.
- Honest self-evaluation may shift one's perspective. Instead of accusing the first (and second) generations, discovering a starting-point for a new intergenerational dialogue would be most helpful.
- Closeness to perpetrator feelings can be frightening. Because these feelings can also be found in oneself, usually they are not approached. In order to learn how to avoid a repetition of history, it is necessary to glimpse the traps; including one's own temptations.
- Post-Holocaust responsibility is a demanding place, comparable to giving birth to new life.

In addition to the particular insights, four concluding themes can be identified, as we look at the moments of transformation in all four summerprograms:

- German language played a teaching role when it was utilized by survivors who expressed their pain. Among the German-speaking students this utilization caused identity confusion because of the language's ambivalent meaning.
- The following factors can be identified which helped to raise a new identity awareness: multiple and contradicting perspectives among the peers, being exposed to various historical sites symbolizing victim and victimizer experience, and being exposed to "the other" in a "holding environment" (Kegan).

- The following issues of intergenerational relations were unearthed: daring to interrupt the silence, stopping accusations, being courageous and honest, and claiming the task in one's own generation.
- The following aspects of a renewed relationship to Jewish people were addressed: facing clichés, being exposed to dissonant impressions, claiming one's own identity as a descendant of the perpetrator community, maintaining vulnerability, and listening to stories as building bridges and relationships.

Differences and Similarities between Field Study I, II, and III

Having presented Field Studies I, II, and III, some of the differences and similarities will be addressed in order to point out common supported insights, contradictions and further questions.

Field Study I raised several issues and questions: Why do German women have so few experiences with Jews and how can relational skills be acquired or taught? How can radical encounters in new contexts be included in religious educational practices in Germany? How can emotional obstacles to communication between the various generations be overcome? In what ways do ambiguous messages from home shape the perception of victims and perpetrators? Three prominent ways to get involved in the Holocaust topic are identified: participating with others in teaching situations, experiencing and reflecting on emotions, and making connections between Holocaust and other historical situations (named in Q 3.) These avenues might be utilized to fill the lack of knowledge regarding women's role and the church's role, as Q 5 and Q6 unearthed. As women become aware of their national identity, the urgency of ethical implications is uncovered, as Q7 revealed.

Field Study II represents more focused research and thus offers insights relative to the educational value of visiting a memorial site. The educational efficacy regarding relational skills appears to be very limited. Compared to results of Field Study I regarding

gender, national and religious identity, and compared to results of Field Study III regarding moments of transformation, the findings of Field Study II support the argument that Holocaust teaching might include a visit to a memorial site, but this alone does not raise (sufficient) awareness in regard to one's identity. Neither does it foster relational skills in terms of the Holocaust heritage.

Field Study III offered many teaching situations which fostered relational learning and identity awareness beyond what could be accomplished in Field Study II. Furthermore, those moments of transformation pointed to a whole texture of learning, characterized by three ingredients: being involved during a specific period of time, being exposed to encounters with the other in the context of a very dynamic group process, and last but not least, leaving one's familiar place and entering a new relational space.

In a way, these problems, questions, and insights from Field Studies I, II, and III map the agenda for subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 will explore in more depth the psychological patterns surfaced in the field studies. Chapter 5 examines women's roles and feminists' critical reflection regarding Holocaust implications. Chapter 6 confronts the dilemmas of Christians. Chapter 7 identifies relational skills that are needed to bridge a separating past. Finally Chapter 8 proposes nine relational movements that show how relational skills can be fostered in the context of religious education.

CHAPTER 3

Public Discourse on the Holocaust

Christina Thürmer-Rohr recollects seeing a documentary film about Ravensbrück, the concentration camp for women north of Berlin. In the film, a Polish Jew who had survived stated that she was not sure if the next generation of Germans was to be found guilty or to be exonerated. That comment sparked the following discussion. A young woman opposed the view that the next generation might be impacted by saying, "We can't really feel today what happened then because it doesn't affect us directly, immediately."¹ Thürmer-Rohr challenged the young woman by interpreting such a conviction as a comfortable excuse to allow oneself a narrowing of feelings, imagination, and moral agency. Thürmer-Rohr says, "I think our complicity exposes itself in the extent to which we fail to grasp the present."²

This is an example of public discourse in which a film evoked response and discussion. The film makers and viewers were engaged with one another in reflecting on historical events that had affected many other people, past and present. The public includes all of these people; in the public, they interact with one another. In this chapter I intend to identify how public discourse during the past post-war decades perceived the present and responded to the ongoing influence of the Nazi past. The purpose for focusing on public discourse is to provide a larger societal and national frame of reference for the following chapters that will deal with the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics stemming from the Holocaust past, such as those dynamics emerging in private discourse.

¹Christina Thürmer-Rohr, *Vagabonding: Feminist Thinking Cut Loose*, trans. Lise Weil (1987; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 37.

²*Ibid.*, 37.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some historical perspectives regarding public discourse on the Holocaust in Germany. Therefore, the chapter begins with some initial reflections on public space and addresses issues related to the location where discourses occur. In order to picture and analyze the discourse, a few landmark events will be described: Karl Jaspers' lectures in 1945, the failure of *Entnazifizierung*,³ the prosecution of Nazi criminals, the Bitburg clash and Weizsäcker's speech in 1985, Jenninger's resignation in 1988, the historical debate in the mid 1980s, and the German involvement in the Gulf War in 1991. Three interpreters of the public discourse are chosen to shed light on it: Ralph Giordano, a Jewish journalist and freelance writer who is living in Germany; Björn Krondorfer, a German who is teaching religion in the U.S.A.; and Paul Ricoeur, the French philosopher. Tilman Moser's observation of a shift from public to private discourse serves to structure the whole design of this chapter.

In attempting to present perspectives on public discourse, at least two reservations need to be stated. First, as Krondorfer has pointed out, not every single German person agrees with the way public discourse has happened. Second, public discourse can often resonate with unspoken, nonverbal transmitted messages, that young people receive in their homes; these also influence the psyche. Sammy Speier writes that "material which is not spoken, which is only transmitted nonverbally, cannot be directly recalled, and yet definitely has an influence on...psychic consciousness as well as [the] unconscious."⁴ For these reasons, explorations of the Holocaust heritage have to take into account the coping of individuals, families, inter-generational relationships, and the dynamics of smaller communities; full understanding also requires analysis of patterns and dynamics in public

³*Entnazifizierung* means cleansing of Nazism, ordered by the allied military forces after Germany's surrender in 1945.

⁴Sammy Speier, "The Psychoanalyst Without a Face: Psychoanalysis without a History," in *The Collective Silence*, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christof Schmidt, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 69.

space and on the national level. Since the dissertation focus is on church women of the second- and third- generation, this chapter focuses only briefly on the national historical landscape.

Models of Public Space

The following reflections on "public space" illuminate considerations of public discourse in Germany regarding the Holocaust by way of putting it into a larger theoretical frame. Seyla Benhabib portrays three models of public space, deriving from Hannah Arendt, the liberal tradition, and Jürgen Habermas. Each of these models of public space is mirrored in a particular tradition of western political thought: civic virtue, strife for a "just and stable public order," and the attempt for a democratic-socialist transformation of western late-capitalist societies.

Hannah Arendt defines public space as characterized by a peculiar type of activity and substantive content in social conversation, particularly related to political discourse and action.⁵ Arendt reiterates the decline of the public realm in modernity in comparison to the Greek polis and Roman *res publica*, describing an "agonistic concept" of public space. Arendt mourns the "rise of the social" as the "loss" of public space due to the emerging conditions of modernity. According to Arendt, institutional differentiation in modern societies lead to a tight political realm on one side and an economic and family realm on the other side.⁶ Arendt interprets "this transformation of the public space of politics into pseudospace of interaction in which individuals no longer 'act' but 'merely behave' as economic producers. . . ." ⁷ Seyla Benhabib dismisses Hannah Arendt's agonistic model as too severely limited to cope with sociological reality and, in particular, political struggles

⁵Ibid., 95.

⁶Ibid., 90.

⁷Ibid., 90.

for justice.⁸ Benhabib bases this judgment on Hannah Arendt's reflections in The Human Condition and The Life of the Mind, but she also employed an additional "associational concept" in her theory of totalitarianism. This perspective suggests that public space occurs whenever "men act together in concert."⁹ This understanding allows for the identification of various locations, emerging as sites of power, established through common action. Benhabib analyzes Arendt's distinction between the social and political as not making sense anymore in the modern world "because the struggle to make something public is a struggle for justice."¹⁰ In Arendt's associational understanding of public space, she also identifies a procedural concept, which emphasizes the very manner in which discourse develops. This model can identify public space as space created by the power of the discourse generated in the climate of potential violence between the opposing forces within that dialogue.

The second model, the liberal model of public space, is a social provision for neutral social discourse, as well as individual and group freedom to act. This model makes an explicit link between power, legitimacy, and public discourse. In a pluralistic society, various groups are supposed to coexist with one another. Neutrality as a main concern of liberal thinking intends to provide space for individuals and groups to pursue their specific concept of good life without challenging those concepts. The liberal model of public space, as seen through the lenses of "public dialogue," attempts to maintain a position of neutrality in terms of discouraging public discussion of disagreements. In Benhabib's view,

⁸Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," in Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics (New York: Routledge, 1992), 89-120.

⁹This quote is cited by Seyla Benhabib in "Models of Public Space," and is attributed to Hannah Arendt. I am unable to locate the source of this quote, although I assume it was taken from The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1968).

¹⁰Benhabib, 94.

political dialogue shifts too quickly into a "juridical discourse about basic rights and liberties."¹¹

Benhabib then suggests a third model, emerging out of a critical discussion with Jürgen Habermas' concept of public space, which allows people "to make issues of common concern public [and] increasingly accessible to discursive transformation."¹² Habermas understands modern societies as extending the realm of public participation. He identifies three possibilities of public participation institutions, individuals, and culture. In institutions, general norms can be developed through discourse. The development of individuals requires more in critical reflection and moves beyond prescriptions of social roles. Cultural traditions are changing through interpretations of contemporary interpreters. Regarding these three realms, the principle of participation becomes a central requirement. In each of the three realms -- society, personality, and culture -- "the reflective effort and contribution of individuals becomes crucial."¹³

In comparing these three models, Benhabib prefers the "discursive public space" model as the one which revolves around questions of democratic legitimacy. She acknowledges that "as feminists we have lacked a critical model of public space and public discourse."¹⁴ In critical and dialectical alliance with Habermas, Benhabib's discourse model builds on the principles of "good reasoning, fair procedure, and the capacity to understand another's viewpoint."¹⁵ Benhabib envisions discourse ethics as a conversational model of enlarged mentality.

As a feminist, Benhabib points to the meaning of the women's movement and its critique of the split between public and private. For centuries, Western thought highlighted

¹¹Ibid., 113.

¹²Ibid., 113.

¹³Ibid., 104.

¹⁴Ibid., 113.

¹⁵Hess, 274, fn. 46.

the distinction between the public and private spheres. The public domain was the political realm where issues of justice were discussed; the private sphere included several distinct dimensions, such as being outside the realm of justice and being seen as the sphere of one's moral and religious conscience. Furthermore, privacy was understood as the intimate sphere, where daily needs are met and issues of sexuality and caring for those who need assistance are addressed. The women's movement pushed and demanded that, hitherto, issues from those so-called private spheres such as reproduction, sexuality, and caring become matters of public attention. No longer should these matters be relegated to personal morality, but rather seen as issues of justice related to power differentials. Thus, changing the discourse about private matters of the good life into public issues of justice required a rethinking of the discourse and the private/public split.¹⁶

During the first decades after Germany's defeat, people coped with their Nazi heritage primarily in public spaces. Currently, however, a shift seems to be occurring. People like Tilman Moser and Martin Walser observe that, on one hand, the public rhetoric has frozen; on the other hand, more and more publications reveal that people are dealing with National Socialist memories in their villages, smaller communities, families and individual lives. Further, accounts of struggles with emotional National Socialist ballast from psychotherapeutic praxis are published.¹⁷ In regard to the current impasse in public discourse in Germany, intensifying the so-called private discourse could unearth repressed memories and challenge people to work through emotional residues stemming from the Nazi past (to be discussed further in Chapter 4). In the context of this shift, overcoming the split between public and private, as Benhabib suggests, could potentially pave the way to a deeper processing of the Nazi heritage. By moving beyond the current, strictly

¹⁶Benhabib, 109.

¹⁷Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, eds., The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993).

determined public rhetoric, the split between public discourse and private discourse might eventually be overcome.

Landmarks in Public Discourse

In order to understand the situation of the third generation, one has to be aware of the history of public debate of the preceding generations. A brief historical overview of key events in public discourse can reveal something of (West-)German experiences and concerns related to the Holocaust. My particular purpose is to shed light on a variety of events which shaped German public awareness and, thus, to seek understanding of the deeper dynamics involved in the public discussion. There is no way to cover all major events during the last decades. Within the scope of this dissertation, I selected a few which cover important times and can illustrate both success and failure. They begin with the time of Germany's defeat in 1945; then follows *Entnazifizierung* as an enforced educational endeavor from the occupying military forces. The prosecution of Nazi criminals symbolizes, also, Ralph Giordano's accusations of "Second guilt" in post-war Germany. The three prominent politicians Helmut Kohl, Richard von Weizsäcker, and Philipp Jenninger shaped the public discourse in the 1980s in very controversial ways. Within the historical debate (Herman Lübbe and others), new arenas open up as more people, including scholars, become involved in the discussion. The voices of Gabriele von Arnim and Irene Wielpütz stand for the growing awareness of a deep, untouched sea of emotions that exists beyond the public discourse. Finally, Tilman Moser gives language to that shift of attention from public to private discourse. Visiting these landmarks will allow the distinction between the public and private discourse on the Holocaust to emerge.

Karl Jaspers' Lectures

During the winter semester 1945/46, the very first semester after the end of WWII, Karl Jaspers held a series of lectures at the University of Heidelberg. They dealt with the intellectual situation in Germany, specifically the question of guilt regarding the past

twelve years of the Third Reich. In his introduction, he referred to the mistrust among many young people who came of age towards the end of the Third Reich. According to his perception, the current situation (1945) was influenced by two characteristics: (1) the totalitarianism of National Socialism (NS) that allowed only propaganda in public communication, and (2) differences among Germans, which inhibited communication.

As to the first characteristic, Jaspers argued that totalitarianism had silenced all independent thinking. NS propaganda inhibited public discussion, public disagreement, and public argumentation, which were essential to any search for political solutions. Almost every private communication was infected by mistrust and anxiety. People had undergone dissimilar inner development and therefore held very different attitudes. Jaspers addressed the necessity for people to transcend these differences and learn to communicate: "In Germany we have to orient ourselves mentally. We do not have yet a common base. . . . We have to regain the readiness of reflecting against the tendency to have all ready-made headlines."¹⁸ Jaspers connected this requirement with the current political situation of living in a destroyed, powerless and occupied country. He called for honesty and openness among his fellow Germans as the only way of achieving a new dignity. This way was still open, even in the situation of total powerlessness, and, according to him, it was the only chance. Very much a realist, he said, "For a long time people in the world will mistrust us."¹⁹

The second characteristic identified by Jaspers refers to the great differences which dominate the German situation and inhibit all efforts at new ways to communicate. Within a forced community, such as that of Germany from 1933 to 1945, wherein members played radically different roles in a shared violent experience, members of that community

¹⁸Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (The issue of guilt) (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1946; reprint, München: R. Piper Verlag, 1979), 15.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 18.

remember and value that history very differently. Jaspers says, "We will be only able to talk reasonably with each other, if we accept the extraordinary differences as departure-points rather than finalities We have to perceive the different origins of current attitudes, caused through education, specific experiences and events."²⁰ The only commonality Jaspers could see was the negative experience of belonging to a totally destroyed nation, depending on the allies, feeling helpless, and nevertheless being forced to take care of oneself alone.

Jaspers pointed also to the great contrasts in the ways of suffering. Every person was worried about daily necessities, like food, housing and warm clothing, and almost every person had lost friends and relatives. Nevertheless, the great differences in the ways their loved ones died and the reasons for their deaths resulted in enormous differences in attitudes. According to Jaspers, the dissimilarities in levels of experienced guilt were equally diverse, while the loss of individuals' faith in community and God was staggering.

Jaspers complained that the whole situation worsened because "so many people do not wish to reflect; they only repeat learned sentences."²¹ They lack the ability to examine claims in a way that would allow them to gain new insights. Jaspers was convinced that Germany can only regain itself, if "we Germans find each other through communication."²² His differentiation among four levels of guilt would have been a valuable contribution to improved communication. He distinguished between political, criminal, moral and metaphysical guilt. Jaspers held that all Germans are guilty in a political sense because they were members of a political community and participated in this system. However, not all people can be accused of those terrible crimes. The Nuremberg trials attempted to make a distinction between the German nation and their criminal leaders. According to Jaspers,

²⁰Ibid., 20.

²¹Ibid., 24.

²²Ibid., 24.

people cannot be forced to examine their moral guilt and metaphysical guilt from outside. Nevertheless, he saw a moral task to deal with guilt: humans must become radically honest in regard to the authority of their own consciences, and perhaps in relation to their most-trusted friends. The deepest awareness of our metaphysical guilt is towards the Divine, who is the only appropriate authority for this deepest human dimension. In regard to metaphysical guilt, confessions of guilt cannot be demanded or forced. Nevertheless, Jaspers invites and encourages everyone to be radically honest, open and clear in regard to their own excuses to escape facing guilt. He sees "the way of cleansing" as the only way to regain human dignity - and eventually to return to the free world community.

In sum, Jaspers addresses the dilemma and importance of finding a new way of communication among Germans. In 1945, he pointed to the moral dimension as a foundation for renewed relations. Already in 1945, Jaspers cautioned against forced confessions of guilt.

Today, reviewing the impasses of public discourse, some of his concerns precisely mark the shift in public discourse in the mid 1990s; in particular, ritualized public discourse is constrained by rigid expectations, correct wordings, ritualized calling upon specific emotions, and little genuine involvement in concrete, creative ways of renewal.

Failure of *Entnazifizierung*

Entnazifizierung was the enforced educational endeavor to examine each German man in regard to his affiliations to the National Socialist party during the Third Reich. Only "clean" people should be allowed to get a pedagogical, governmental or other responsible position. Since the various zones (American military, French military, English military and Russian military) handled it differently, and local committees and churches decided according to their own opinions, the *Entnazifizierung* failed.

In 1988, Hajo Funke edited a collection of essays titled Von der Gnade der geschenkten Nation (On the Grace of the Gifted Nation).²³ Analyzing scandals in Germany during the 1980s, this collection makes a connection between the rejection of NS victim claims in the course of the reparation debate in the German parliament (*Bundestag*) and the moral situation of the state during the 1950s. Those years were characterized by half-measures of the *Entnazifizierung*, which, according to Niethammer, actually contributed to the economic miracle during the 1950s and early 1960s. Niethammer suggests that the *Entnazifizierung* functioned as a quick solution to get rid of the NS past, but pushed the deeper task of working through the NS past into other spheres, which had enormous influence on the social, political, and psychological dynamics of the post-war society.²⁴ To me it seems that the failure of *Entnazifizierung* is an example how the chance of a joint effort between public and private to deal constructively with the Nazi legacy was missed.

Prosecution of Nazi Criminals

Another arena of public discourse was known worldwide, namely the prosecution of Nazi criminals. Helge Grabitz, prosecuting attorney in Hamburg, and chair of the department for NS atrocities since 1983, reports on the prosecution of NS crimes in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), and Austria.²⁵ The intent of the *Entnazifizierung* was to find all Nazi criminals and eliminate all Nazi influence and sympathy. According to Grabitz, this made many Germans feel they had to repress any information about their actions which might make the allied

²³Hajo Funke, ed., Von der Gnade der geschenkten Nation (On the grace of the gifted nation) (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1988).

²⁴Lutz Niethammer, "Entnazifizierung" (De-nazification), in Von der Gnade der geschenkten Nation, ed. Hajo Funke (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1988), 115.

²⁵Helge Grabitz, "Die Verfolgung von NS-Verbrechen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, der DDR und Österreich" (The prosecution of NS crimes in FRGermany, German Democratic Republic and Austria), in Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust, ed. Rolf Steininger (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994).

military forces believe them to be Nazi sympathizers. The cleansing effort failed to locate every Nazi. Many who should have been caught were able to emigrate or disappear, while those who had played only minor roles were caught and labeled guilty. Even the trial of Nuremberg, with its twelve follow-up processes and other military trials were considered as "justice of the victors" (*Siegerjustiz*), and not acknowledged as self-cleansing, like Jaspers had demanded. Since January 1, 1950, Germany has held the unconditional jurisdiction for NS atrocities. Three times public debates were held regarding an extension of the statute of limitations for prosecuting Nazi criminals.

For a long period, the NS trials were conducted with the public excluded. According to Grabitz, this exclusion was quite irresponsible since it missed an important pedagogical opportunity to prevent a revival of criminal systems. The journalists did not inform the public, which led to a total lack of national involvement. This situation changed dramatically in January 1979, when the American film series "Holocaust" was shown on German television. Grabitz is convinced that this film alerted the German public and allowed a process of grasping the NS past to a degree to which other media had hitherto failed.²⁶

The Bitburg Clash

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's infamous reference to "*Die Gnade der späten Geburt*" (the grace of having been born late) was played out in various events. Many disagreed with this attempt to exonerate the late-born generations. For instance, Hajo Funke's book title -- *Von der Gnade der geschenkten Nation* (On the Grace of the Gifted Nation) -- plays on that. In 1985, Helmut Kohl and U.S. President Ronald Reagan visited the German military cemetery in Bitburg, as a gesture of reconciliation between the German and American people. Actually it upset many people, because Chancellor Kohl's

²⁶*Ibid.*, 207.

language declared all the dead as "victims" and thus did not distinguish between perpetrators and various victim groups. He said, "A few minutes ago, the President of the United States of America and I paid homage at the military cemetery to the dead buried there and thus to all victims of war and tyranny The visit to the graves in Bitburg is . . . a widely visible and widely felt gesture of reconciliation between our peoples."²⁷

According to anthropologist David Kertzer, Bitburg displayed that "overcoming the past means changing the symbols of the present."²⁸ Kohl did not distinguish between victims and victimizers; rather he gave up the historical dichotomy between those who were violated and those who found death in violating others. Kohl's public comments, and the consequent reactions within the German and Jewish communities seemed to unearth again a principle in the public discourse in both communities: "The stronger the German rejection of the role of victimizer, the stronger the Jewish assertion of their victimization."²⁹ Some worried about this confusion in advance of the public visit to Bitburg. For instance, shortly before Reagan left for Germany, Elie Wiesel spoke at the White House, emphasizing: "That place [Bitburg], Mr. President, is not your place. Your place is with the victims of the SS."³⁰

Reflecting on the language used in the Bitburg controversy and other events, Krondorfer observed that "the discourse long ago shifted from the moral to the political

²⁷German chancellor Helmut Kohl at Bitburg, 5 May 1985, cited in Björn Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation: Encounters between Young Jews and Germans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 23.

²⁸David Kertzer, Ritual, Politics, and Power (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 95.

²⁹Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 27.

³⁰Wiesel gave this speech on 19 April 1985. Reprinted in Geoffrey Hartman, ed., Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 241.

agenda."³¹ The motivations and purposes of public discourse were, thus, very complex and carried unsolved and hidden moral residues.

Richard von Weizsäcker's Speech on the 40th Anniversary

In May 1985, President Richard von Weizsäcker addressed the German Parliament on the fortieth anniversary of Germany's surrender. His speech, for the first time, reached out to the many and diverse groups of victims and publicly acknowledged the role of NS Germany in bringing so much suffering to them. His speech received widespread national and international attention.

Today we mourn all the dead of the war and the tyranny. In particular we commemorate the six million Jews who were murdered in German concentration camps. We commemorate all nations who suffered in the war, especially the countless citizens of the Soviet Union and Poland who lost their lives. As Germans, we mourn our own compatriots who lost their lives as soldiers during air raids at home, in captivity or during expulsion. We commemorate the Sinti and Roma gypsies, the homosexuals and the mentally ill who were killed, as well as the people who had to die for their religious or political beliefs. We commemorate the hostages who were executed. We recall the victims of the resistance movements in all the countries occupied by us. As Germans, we pay homage to the victims of the German resistance - among the public, the military, the churches, the workers and trade unions, and the communists . . . The perpetration of this crime was in the hands of a few people. It was concealed from the eyes of the public; but every German was able to experience what his Jewish compatriots had to suffer, ranging from plain apathy and hidden intolerance to outright hatred . . . There were many ways of not burdening one's conscience, of shunning responsibility, looking away, keeping mum . . . There is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt is, like innocence, not collective, but personal...Everyone who directly experienced that era should today quietly ask himself [sic] about his [sic] involvement then . . . The vast majority of today's population were either children then or had not been born. They cannot profess a guilt of their own for crimes that they did not commit . . . But their forefathers [sic] have left them a grave legacy. All of us, whether guilty or not, whether old or young, must accept the past. We are all affected by its consequences and liable for it . . .³²

³¹Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 27.

³²Richard von Weizsäcker, "Guilt and Responsibility," in Church in Germany: Facts, Pictures, Aspects, ed. Reinhild Freise (Stuttgart: Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany, 1994), 16-18.

With this speech, Richard von Weizsäcker reached out to the various groups of victims, violated by Germany during its Nazi tyranny. He did not distance himself from Nazi Germans, nor did he neglect the many ways Germans shunned their responsibility during that time. Von Weizsäcker also distinguished between various degrees of guilt, which cannot be laid upon the second and third generations. But he also affirmed the responsibility for each generation to deal with that legacy. In 1984, this was a courageous move toward more honesty in the public discourse. What he did not address is the so-called "second guilt," a term coined by Ralph Giordano in 1987, interpreting the silence regarding continuous injustice in post-war Germany.³³

Philipp Jenninger's Speech on the 50th Anniversary of *Kristallnacht*

In November 1988, at the 50th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the German parliament (*Bundestag*) held a memorial. The only appointed keynote speaker was Philipp Jenninger (CDU), then president of the *Bundestag*. Heinz Galinsky had been suggested as a speaker to represent the Jewish community in Germany, but his name had been rejected, and he was not invited to address the audience. The resulting tension caused debates even before the actual event. President Jenninger's speech was flawed in many regards. During his talk, representatives from the Green party and SPD left the room. The controversy that later erupted led to his resignation, even though the German public had not had the chance to read and deal with the content of the speech.

In Die Sprachen der Vergangenheiten³⁴ (The Languages of the Past), Wodak, Menz, Mitten and Stern reflected on Jenninger's speech. Their essay is titled "*Irgendwie musste das ja mal endlich gesagt werden*" (That had to be said eventually), quoting a

³³Ralph Giordano will be one of the interpreters at the end of this chapter.

³⁴Ruth Wodak, Florian Menz, Richard Mitten, and Frank Stern, Die Sprachen der Vergangenheiten: Öffentliches Gedenken in österreichischen und deutschen Medien (The languages of the past: Public remembrance in Austrian and German media) (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994), 163-90.

spontaneous reaction among Jenninger's constituents. Wodak is convinced that Jenninger's language mirrors a group language, which revealed a political attitude, leading unexpectedly to a scandal in the political culture of West-Germany. Because it was the 50th anniversary of that organized pogrom, 1988 was filled with publications and media coverage not seen before in post-war Germany. The memorial in the *Bundestag* was supposed to be a high point in the year of remembrance; instead it emerged as a low point. The decisions and tensions that preceded the memorial turned it into a political issue. The TAZ (die tageszeitung, a Berlin leftist newspaper) 7.11.1988 concluded, "The chancellor will give a speech in the Frankfurt synagogue, the president of the German Jews will be silent in the *Bundestag*." After Bitburg and the historical debate, the Jenninger speech became one of the central subjects of public discourse during the 1980s.

What kind of speech was it? The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that Jenninger seemed to be emotionally remote from his speech. After the very first sentences a contradiction becomes obvious: "the contradiction between written and verbal text."³⁵ Jenninger failed not only to grasp the unfathomable significance of the historical event, but also ignored the tensions existing prior to his speech. Furthermore, he seriously lacked the ability to indicate when he was quoting Nazi rhetoric and describing the circumstances and attitudes of that earlier time. The audience did not perceive a critical evaluation of Nazi ideology and, thus, was left confused about Jenninger's actual message. Was he guilty of "just" a linguistic insensibility or did he rather express an attitude which could be heard in pubs, but was never acceptable in such an official place and event. His emotional remoteness and his failure to make clear that he did not approve of Hitler's accomplishments came especially to the forefront when he said,

³⁵*Ibid.*, 168.

More detrimental than Hitler's evil deeds and atrocities were perhaps his successes for the fate of the German and European Jews. Looking back from this distance and knowing the consequences, the years 1933 to 1938 are still today a *faszinosum* in terms of there being no parallel in history to Hitler's political triumph during those first years.³⁶

Three serious flaws can be found in only this one passage. First, "*faszinosum* today" and the following description of Hitler's "success" failed to reflect the appropriate distance of the speaker and was not balanced by an extensive description of the terror. Second, according to this presentation, the majority of Germans perceived in Hitler the greatest politician, and thus were not able to make a deviating moral judgment on the *Reichskristallnacht*. Third, what were identified as Hitler's amazing accomplishments were an attempt to blame the Weimar democracy as providing a spring board for Hitler's trajectory to power.

Chancellor Kohl insisted on laying this scandal to rest before he was to leave for the United States two days later, a trip that was intended to focus on Jewish concerns. Jenninger was forced to resign. Martin Walser called Jenninger's fall the "*Tugendterror der political correctness*" (terror of the virtues of political correctness).³⁷ Jenninger's speech can be critically interpreted as working towards a detachment from the burden of that past. The original purpose of commemorating the victims of the *Kristallnacht* committed by German hands would have required the nation to pay a respectful homage to those who had suffered most. The tension between critiquing a detachment from the past and Martin Walser's assessment mirrors at least three characteristics of public discourse of the 1980s. First, political forces seem to play an increasing role; second, high expectations from a heterogeneous public audience require finely tuned attention to linguistics; and third, the political realm of public discourse seems not to be the appropriate place for learning

³⁶Quoted in Wodak, 171.

³⁷Tilman Moser, *Dämonische Figuren* (Demonic shapes) (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996), 301.

processes. If someone failed, like in Jenninger's case, political constraints forced him to resign, even before a broad public discussion was launched.

The Post-Holocaust Historical Debate

Hermann Lübbe critiques the term and concept of "repression" as an inaccurate description of the German relationship to its NS past.³⁸ The term "repression" is borrowed from psychoanalysis and used frequently to interpret Germany's post-war relationship with National Socialism. Lübbe doubts that this term is really helpful in understanding Germany's relationship to the past in public discourse. He addresses three factors that shaped the situation in Germany immediately after May 1945; these support his argument that "repression" was not the primary reaction. First, he points to the totality of the German defeat, which was different from that of World War I where a so-called *Dolchstoßlegende* emerged saying that German forces contributed to the defeat. Second, the evidence of Germany's responsibility for the disastrous ending of the Third Reich was clear. According to Lübbe, everyone understood that the destruction of cities and expelling of millions of Germans from their homeland were a fair "receipt" for the debt Germany owed for its actions. Lübbe perceives the third factor as a general perspective that goes without any further discussion, namely the immoral dimension of the totalitarian mass atrocities. He argues that, in a situation where the horrible present is experienced as a result of one's past, people will find it easy to admit this past. The past only then becomes an issue if Germany regains importance and starts to relate to the neighboring countries; it must then rebuild these broken relationships.

³⁸ Hermann Lübbe, "Verdrängung? Über eine Kategorie zur Kritik des deutschen Vergangenheitsverhältnisses" (Repression? On a category regarding the critique of the German relation to its past), in Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit. Historikerstreit und Erinnerungsarbeit (The present of the past: Historical debate and remembrance work), ed. Hans-Hermann Wiebe (Bad Segeberg: Verlag C.H. Wäser, 1989), 94-106.

I do not agree with Lübke's argumentation. He seems to assume that there was no need to discuss the morality of the Nazi atrocities. As Jaspers had pointed out, during the Third Reich, there was no moral discussion in public before, during, or after such events. How could the public shift its moral perception without discussion and debate? I also question his understanding that being "somebody" is a prerequisite to feeling the burden of that past. In Chapter 7, I explicitly suggest that women must first learn to stand up in order to acquire the capacity to take responsibility. Lübke's definition of being "somebody" seems to be connected with gaining a power position, in comparison to being healed and learning to take responsibility.

Lübke points to two awkward results of applying the "repression" theory: He assumes that this contributes to a de-moralization of politics and a moralization of psychoanalysis. Others agree with the observation that issues of morality seem to be detached from political discussions.³⁹ Contemporary psychoanalysts acknowledge that psychoanalysis indeed needs to develop an ethical foundation, an acknowledgment which can only be welcomed.⁴⁰

Lübke represents the neo-conservative voices, who were the first to introduce the consensus theory into the so-called *Historikerstreit* (historical debate). His intellectual counterpart Jürgen Habermas interpreted it as the neo-conservative need for having consensus (1982). Due to a shift in the culture of the 1980s, with an increase of subjectivity, neo-conservative representatives saw the need for a strong coherent understanding of history, capable of forming identity. In particular, the period of National Socialism could no longer be silenced but required a radical shift in the interpretation of the NS period. Particular attention must be paid to the situation of the little people in order to relativize the unique incredibility of NS atrocities. Various arguments were expressed to

³⁹Krondorfer, *Remembrance and Reconciliation*, 27.

⁴⁰Sammy Speier, "The Psychoanalyst Without a Face," 61-72.

undergird this direction. Resistance against such an endeavor among historians was brought to the forefront by persons such as Saul Friedländer, Hans Mommsen and Jürgen Habermas. Friedländer pointed out the danger of focusing on the non-ideological, non-political dimensions of the NS period and neglecting the criminal dimension. Furthermore, the neo-conservative interpretation of NS history implied that the NS period should be understood as a rupture in German national history and, therefore, cease to play such a dominant role, which undermined a coherent national identity for post-NS generations.

This debate during the mid and late 1980s was very complex and for the first time not limited to scholarly journals and magazines but rather discussed controversially as part of the public discourse through newspapers. Later, the mid 1990s were characterized by reports, accounts, and research on "average people," but mostly with a different intention: to understand more deeply the involvement of local history in the NS system and its atrocities. Nevertheless, ten years after the *Historikerstreit*, Daniel Goldhagen's book Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust, was published. When it reached the German audience, the public was unexpectedly forced to deal with his contention that average Germans were involved in that murderous regime.

With these discussions in mind, we move next to the shifts of discussion into private space. The following three sections consider Gabriele von Arnim, Irene Welpütz, and Tilman Moser, all addressing themes that mark the shift of attention from public to private discourse. In this respect, the next events indicate zones of transition. Since various layers of public and private discourse overlap in terms of time and themes, and also influence each other, I will continue with the chronological treatment of events, and will return to a most prominent landmark of public discourse later, namely the debate regarding a national Holocaust memorial in Germany.

The Great Silence

During the 1980s, publications appeared which addressed the Holocaust from a different angle, no longer reflecting and interpreting events in public discourse, but rather focusing on individuals' journeys and transformations in dealing with it. Gabriele von Arnim presents this shift. When she attempted to interview contemporaries on the Holocaust, she was met by the great silence in which they buried the past. In her journal entries written during 1988, she specifically reflected on encounters with the shadow of the past. How are people to deal with that past? "Just deal with the past," was one of the answers she found. "There is no end to it. There is no closure. One cannot detach from it and be saved, but rather one can live despite it and, especially, one can love."⁴¹

Von Arnim's change in writing style mirrors a decisive shift from contributing to public discourse to contributing to private discourse. Since von Arnim was not able to interview contemporaries on the Holocaust, she chose instead to jot down impressions from visits with people surrounded by and breathing the "great silence." Instead of describing and writing about other people's perspectives, making them accessible through publication, she turned to journaling, a very intimate form of writing. She shared her own encounters with the great silence.

Gulf War and the Involvement of German Firms

The events of the Gulf War awakened further reactions. Irene Wielpütz is a Jewish social worker who returned with her family from Brazil and lives now in Germany. As a Jewish voice, she addresses the emotional dynamics behind publicly stated opinions. In 1991, she reflected particularly on German reactions to the war in the Persian gulf. During that war, it became known that German companies had sent poison gas to Iraq with which Iraq had threatened Israel. It was inevitable that this would recall the mass gassing of Jews

⁴¹Gabriele von Arnim, Das grosse Schweigen (The great silence) (München: Kindler, 1989), 8.

during the Third Reich. Wielpütz particularly was distressed about reactions in Germany after the public received knowledge of this action. For her, the reactions revealed that the past had not been worked through. She observed that diffuse guilt feelings, "repressed or open, help people not to be shocked and above all to accept no responsibility for errors, for failure to act."⁴² She describes her vision that if people could move beyond guilt feelings:

. . . they would all attend to their history, on both sides, including all that was so ugly; they would have to go through fear, rage, and sorrow, and they would then have to enter upon a new road to their own identity, regardless of whether they were German-Jewish, non-Jewish⁴³

Irene Wielpütz identifies the processes which hitherto were lacking in the public discourse, themes and emotions; these need to be worked through on a local and personal level.

Public and the Private Coping with the NS period

In 1994, Tilman Moser, a psychotherapist, lectured at the University of Freiburg on the fiftieth anniversary of the bombardments there. He stated that Germany, in the process of working through the NS past, arrived at a turning point. "The phase of 'public coping' moves into the back, the coping in private and family sphere is about to intensify."⁴⁴

Tilman Moser observes two streams of the *Zeitgeist* fighting against one another: the persistent and repetitious calling to repentance, but also the demand for a limit on the time for public coping. Because of the notion of collective guilt, currently remembering and blaming is conflated, which prevents a clarification of how memory and accusation are related to one another in the German discourse. In contrast to the publicly acknowledged

⁴²Irene Wielpütz, "The Difficulty of Speaking the Unspeakable," in The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 193.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 193.

⁴⁴Moser, 300.

and exercised task of Holocaust discourse after 1945, Tilman Moser recalls the great silence about the NS time in the families.

The private coping was delegated to the public rituals. Only now children and grandchildren are asking their parents and grandparents: 'How did you slide into that and how did you experience the NS-time and war?' ⁴⁵

According to Tilman Moser, only now, two generations after the war and the atrocities, does it happen that, outside of public speeches, memories surface and seek expression. ⁴⁶

The Ongoing Debate for a National Holocaust Memorial

In spring 1997, three colloquia of 70 renowned experts from economics, politics and culture were invited to discuss the concept, form and location for a national Holocaust memorial in Germany. ⁴⁷ Having surfaced several times since 1992, this topic was boiling again and went through various stages of decision. A public contest unearthed many proposals, the first nine were each awarded 50.000DM in June 1995. The Jury favored the proposal of Jakob-Marks, of a huge, 100-square-meter memorial slab with the engraved names of 4.3 million murdered Jews. The journalist Lea Rosh, in particular, favored this proposal. The colloquia in spring 1997 were a reaction to the ongoing critique of this proposal and, simultaneously, unraveled underlying issues connected with the dilemma of creating a national Holocaust memorial in Germany, the country of the perpetrators.

I will address a few of these very controversial issues. First, the *procedere* between 1992 and 1997 points to the tension between a growing public awareness of the need for a national memorial and the intentions of political representatives who seem to be lagging behind the public in this matter. Anita Kugler critiqued Jakob-Marks' first favored draft,

⁴⁵Ibid., 303.

⁴⁶Ibid., 305.

⁴⁷Reported in TAZ January 13, 1997 by Mariam Niroumand (essay on "Remembering for the Advanced") and Anita Kugler (essay on "Adversaries Were Not Invited").

claiming the huge slab was intended to intimidate the descendants of the perpetrators. She and others recognized that pedagogical motivations might be driving decision-makers to favor a huge black slab, but many memorial sites all over the country seemed to indicate that the general population was dealing with the past in a different way than the politicians assumed. The many events remembering the 50th anniversary of the defeat of the Third Reich in 1995, the publication and high interest in Viktor Klemperer's journals, and the Goldhagen debate were shaping the general historical awareness of the German public much more than the initiators for the central memorial anticipated or realized.

The issue was expressed second by historian Jürgen Kocka, who identified a lack of shame in the selected proposals. All drafts are "roaring and monumental," but "shame is quiet and turns inward, is humble."⁴⁸ Kocka also missed the connection to the authentic locations of NS terror, such as the Wannseevilla, the Topography of Terror, and the wider Berlin memorial landscape. None of the other memorial site directors had been invited to the colloquia, as art historian Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtis pointed out.

A third issue was addressed by Jewish voices, protesting the use of Jewish symbols in service of German remembering. Rachel Salamander challenged the historian Eberhard Jäckel by saying, "Jewish rituals are not a self service store where one can pick out particular traditions and instrumentalize them for one's own purposes."⁴⁹ The initiators of the idea of a Berlin memorial monument, Lea Rosh and Eberhard Jäckel, had been impacted by the great Jewish memorial Yad Vashem in Israel and had envisioned something similar.

A fourth issue is the general dilemma over an appropriate way by which former perpetrators can remember their victims. That seems to be an unsolvable dilemma. In

⁴⁸Quoted by Kugler, 16.

⁴⁹Ibid., 16.

history it has never happened before.⁵⁰ This dilemma is mirrored in the controversial public discourse on the differentiation between a Holocaust memorial or a *Shoah* memorial; in other words, whether to create a central national memorial to mourn the destruction of European Jewry or to mourn the many victim groups of the NS terror. The historian Reinhart Koselleck stated the contradiction by saying, "If we decide against a joint memorial for all victims of the terror system, then we will accept a hierarchy among the dead."⁵¹ Peter Steinbach, in his essay Die Vergegenwärtigung von Vergangenen,⁵² points to the various realities of persecution and war reflected in the term "victim." He suggests that the debate about memorials, museums, and symbols must take into account that human remembrance has to accomplish both simultaneously.⁵³ Reflecting on the new national remembrance day of the victims of NS on January 27, he suggests not to compartmentalize or taboo suffering as happened in public discourse immediately after 1945. The repressed trauma of millions of expelled Germans from eastern Europe at the end of World War II through the approaching Red Army was excluded from national remembrance. But it was addressed in German family settings, pubs, and clubs, and resulted in a numbness toward the tragedy of genocide against Jews.

Pondering the German debate, I realize that remembering in the U.S. appears to be much easier than in Germany. In December 1997, the former Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal was appointed to head the new Jewish museum in Berlin. This decision to build a Jewish museum on the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin solves the problem of

⁵⁰Niroumand, 10.

⁵¹Ibid., 16.

⁵²Peter Steinbach, "Die Vergegenwärtigung von Vergangenen. Zum Spannungsverhältnis zwischen individueller Erinnerung und öffentlichem Gedenken" (On making present the past: The tension between individual remembering and public remembrance), Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Beilage zur Wochenzeitung Das Parlament, 17 Jan. 1997, 3-13.

⁵³Ibid., 4.

information extensively and includes ongoing programs about Jewish history and life on a national level. The dilemma of how Germany as a national entity can most appropriately remember the victims of the NS past is not yet solved. Germany's central national Holocaust memorial cannot be a slab imprinted with names, which would be misinterpreted as an attempt to close the door on the history of those twelve years or to serve as a substitute for individual remembering. That would be a token and inappropriate gesture.

The ongoing discussion about an appropriate memorial, while appearing to drag on endlessly, offers the best chance to deal in a meaningful way with the Nazi past. Unfortunately, this public discourse is very much a battle field of political debate, which employs remembering as a means of political posturing.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the debates have influenced the public consciousness of Germans. International reactions to these debates have also influenced the German debates. According to Steinbach, the remembrance culture, historical consciousness and German readiness to remember will continue to draw international attention. To me, these circles of interaction between nations with opposing positions in history can contribute to a blurring of the original shadows and thus make it even more difficult to find the path for facing the horror, feeling the sorrow, allowing the shame - and acknowledging moral responsibility for Germany today.

On June 26, 1999, the German parliament with 559 members put an end to the eleven years of debate by ruling that Peter Eisenmann's draft of a *Stelenwald* -- forest of steles -- would be the prospective national memorial of Germany.⁵⁵ The alternative, favored by theologian Richard Schröder, had suggested to engrave the commandment "You shall not kill" on a still-to-be-developed artifact. Despite many political tensions, this

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁵The term *stèle* comes from the ancient Greek culture and means pillar of stone, often with an inscription remembering deceased persons.

decision suggests that the majority of the *Bundestag* supports the idea of commemorating the Jewish victims of the Nazi past in a way that does not allow a closure of the history, but keeps alive the non-answerable questions. The *Stelenwald* does not convey a message but rather invites to remember and to face the past. Next to the *Stelenwald*, a place of information will be established. This compromise reflects tensions surrounding ideas of building a fancy museum or trusting the power of abstract art to speak the unspeakable. The decision to build the *Stelenwald* seems to indicate that the *Bundestag* and thus the representatives of the German people, are willing at this point in history to risk keeping questions alive rather than attempting to force an answer which cannot be found. To me, that seems to be a sign of hope. The events and trajectories of public discourse in more than fifty years of post-war history reveal the difficulty, awkwardness and influence of this discourse. The very tension within it, and the problematic that appear when people generalize or downplay the atrocities and deal inadequately with shame, may reveal some of the reasons for silencing and shifting toward private discourse.

Voices of Interpretation and Assessment of the Public Discourse

The previous section focused on landmarks of public discourse and transition in post-war Germany, outlining the development from moral to political reflections and then the shift of attention from public to private discourse at the beginning of the 1990s. In this section, three voices of interpretation of the public discourse are discussed. These are Ralph Giordano, a German Jew and member of the first generation; Björn Krondorfer, a German theologian teaching in the United States and a member of the second generation; and Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher and former prisoner of war, also of the first generation.

Ralph Giordano: The Second Guilt

Ralph Giordano was born in 1923 in Hamburg. Since his mother was Jewish, his family was persecuted by the Third Reich. In 1987, his book Die Zweite Schuld oder Von

der Last Deutscher zu sein (The Second Guilt or The burden of Being German) was published. Within a very short time he had received more than 1200 letters, responding to his observations about second guilt in post-war Germany. He considers the core of his publication to revolve around two key phrases: the great peace with the perpetrators and the loss of human orientation.⁵⁶ Sometimes using very concise and sharp language, he accuses the contemporaries of the Third Reich of having committed a historical error by not dealing with the National Socialist past and their own role in it after 1945.⁵⁷ With this error, they masked themselves in order to protect themselves and, by doing so, the first generation placed an enormous burden on the next generation.⁵⁸ Giordano says "The majority of people who denied and repressed the truth succeeded in impacting those who followed them in German society with the burden of their great lie."⁵⁹ From the very beginning of his delineation, Giordano uses the term "guilt" intentionally to inform his readers that directly addressing guilt is the most appropriate way to deal with guilt. For him, the second guilt mirrors the first guilt. According to his interpretation, most criminals of the Nazi regime escaped, except a very few who were brought to court. That this could happen with the silent agreement and support of post-war Germany, indicates that neither the first nor the second generation faced honestly the criminal ideology of National Socialism.

To support his argument of Germans having lost their human orientation, Giordano examines the so-called "collective affects" -- feelings and expressions not found in public discourse, but rather at meetings of friends at the pub. In his view, the treatment of the Nazi past occurs in two very distinct realms: one is the *Stammtisch* (meeting point in a

⁵⁶Giordano, 11.

⁵⁷Ibid., 12.

⁵⁸Giordano dedicated his book The Second Guilt to the burdened, guiltless sons and daughters.

⁵⁹Ibid., 14.

pub, in particular among men), and the second refers to the publicized opinion found in newspapers, magazines, broadcasting, and television. Giordano, himself a journalist and connected with television, observes a remarkable contrast between those realms. Whereas the media deal with the Nazi past continuously, "another part of public opinion remains rather deaf and untouched."⁶⁰ For him the target group of the second guilt is not just evil-doers, but rather people who lost their inner orientation, what he calls human orientation. The lack of an inner compass is revealed in those collective affects which can be listened to in pubs or family gatherings. He cites sayings, such as

"But we did not know anything" or "Hitler committed not only evil, he accomplished also valuable things such as the *Autobahnen*" or "Under Hitler we had discipline. You could walk on the streets at night without being in danger. But today"

Giordano sharply analyzes the underlying assumptions, and he points to the continuation of Nazi values. He unravels such collective affects as part of a joint effort to ease and exonerate one's burden. The strong reaction to his book Die Zweite Schuld indicates that he had put into words what many people were already pondering. Young people were grateful for his powerful and strong statements, older people shared observations and feelings they had not shared before. Some of those letters were published as Wie kann diese Generation eigentlich noch atmen? (How Can This Generation Still Breathe?)⁶¹

Björn Krondorfer: Differing Discourses in German and Jewish Communities

Björn Krondorfer, as a member of the second generation, encountered the predicament of German-Jewish relations during his studies in the United States.

⁶⁰Ibid., 17.

⁶¹Giordano, ed. "Wie kann diese Generation eigentlich noch atmen?": Briefe zu dem Buch Die zweite Schuld ("How can this generation actually still breathe?": Letters to the book: The second guilt or On the burden to be a German) (München: Knaur, 1992).

Theoretically and practically, he devoted energy to work toward reconciliation. His theoretical reflections and his exchange programs provide valuable resources for my own work.

In his search for an intelligent terminology in the midst of all the challenges of Jewish/German dialogue, Krondorfer examined the "discursive practices" and "ethos" of each community. "Discursive practice" refers to "those public voices within each culture which have framed the issues relating to Jews, Germans, and the Holocaust."⁶² This understanding of "discursive practice" implies that not every single German person agrees with the way public discourse happened. But in paying attention to events and voices in post-war Germany, patterns of discourse emerge which are different from those emerging in Jewish communities. The following example is taken from one of Björn Krondorfer's summer exchange programs, where young American Jews and young Germans traveled together for four weeks, dealing explicitly with the Holocaust. The first day was devoted to sharing one's family story in small mixed groups by showing family photos and other documents from that time. Visual displays of family documents and photos revealed group patterns, cultural patterns, differences between the Jewish and German participants. Almost contradicting this first learning, students also recognized individual traits in these stories. Individual stories raised questions about unconscious stereotypes of "the Jews" and "the Germans". Clichés, fixations could be addressed as something which lay inside the listener, shaped by a discourse of his or her respective community.⁶³

⁶²Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 11.

⁶³Björn Krondorfer, "Biographische Arbeit in jüdisch/deutschen Begegnungsgruppen nach der Shoah," (Biographical work in Jewish-German encounter groups after the Shoah) Biographische Arbeit in der Erwachsenenbildung: Beispiele aus der Praxis (Biographical work in adult education: Examples from the praxis), ed. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie, (Berlin: Oktoberdruck, 1998), 37.

Ethos refers to a deeper and hidden dimension of German-Jewish relations. Krondorfer defines ethos as "what people deeply believe about their way of living and thinking."⁶⁴ Discourse and ethos both focus attention on communities, embracing an inclusive and a discerning capacity which I find quite instrumental for examining issues of collective identity. Both terms allow people to address commonalities and differences between the historical victims and victimizer community.

Why are reflections on one's collective identity so crucial for Holocaust education? The formation of one's identity is shaped by the public discourse of one's culture. Knowing assumptions of one's culture can help one to understand the components influencing one's identity formation. Krondorfer says that there are intricate links between the formation of identities and the function of memory.⁶⁵ Public discourse is shaping communal ethos. As the analysis of political events reveals, there might be discrepancies between the way people present themselves, discursive practice, and the way people feel deeply, namely, their underlying ethos. In the political arena, rectifying this discrepancy might be an important move toward greater honesty and, thus, more real encounters.⁶⁶

Efforts to rectify this discrepancy requires specific attention to one peculiar and complex obstacle, namely, the intermingling of various guilt dimensions in public discourse. In classical thinking, the idea that guilt touches the moral conscience belongs to the private sphere. According to Krondorfer, the German discourse/ethos is shaped by guilt feelings. In 1945, only a few months after the end of the Third Reich, the philosopher Karl Jaspers had elaborated on four dimensions of guilt, specifically in regard to the Third Reich. Pondering the public discourse in Germany today with its underlying ethos of guilt, Jaspers early insights could be helpful in discerning various dimensions of guilt. The

⁶⁴Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 11.

⁶⁵Ibid., 22.

⁶⁶Ibid., 49.

current intermingling of guilt dimensions and coping with them in inappropriate locations seriously inhibit more real encounters.

Paul Ricoeur: Overcoming the Fixation of the Past

The Frenchman and philosopher Paul Ricoeur observed and participated in post-war public discourse in Europe for five decades. An interview in a leading newspaper illuminates some of his insights and interpretations of the current challenges to the public discourse in Germany.

In 8 October 1998, *Die Zeit* published this interview with Paul Ricoeur, titled "*Die Geschichte ist kein Friedhof*" (History is not a cemetery).⁶⁷ The journalist was asking what Ricoeur meant with his recent statement that we should return the future to the past (*der Vergangenheit ihre Zukunft wiedergeben*). Paul Ricoeur explained that we are not allowed to be locked into the discourse on guilt, and its focus on Germans and French people who were actors in the horrible events. Referring to the time between 1932 and 1945, he acknowledged that this time period pertains to one of the most explored times in history. Ricoeur summarized from his point of view what this extensive research precipitated: we are able to know the facts, nothing is expected to be hidden anymore, and the guilty people are judged. We do not have to do this anymore.

I might question the latter one, in particular in regard to women's share of responsibility. To me it seems that women have not yet acknowledged their share of guilt. I will come back to that in Chapters 5 and 6.

Ricoeur requests that we learn to understand the position of ambivalence, an attempt to orient oneself and to decide. He says, "We have to rediscover the uncertainty of history" (*Man muss die Ungewissheit der Geschichte wiederfinden*).⁶⁸ Ricoeur also

⁶⁷Paul Ricoeur, "Die Geschichte ist kein Friedhof" (History is not a cemetery), *Die Zeit*, 8 Oct. 1998, sec. Feuilleton, 68-69.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 68.

rejects writing history as a way to take events to court. He rather welcomes Freud's concept of "remembering, repeating and working through," which reflects the necessity to interrupt a compulsion in order to enter the work of remembering. In regard to the debate on creating a national memorial site in Berlin to remember the victims of the Holocaust, Ricoeur points to an underlying rationale for such an endeavor: namely by those who survived the attempt to create meaning out of the suffering of those who perished. He explains "It is the duty of those who survived to respond to that situation" (*Solcher Lage zu entsprechen, darin liegt die Schuldigkeit der Überlebenden*).⁶⁹ The term *Schuldigkeit* alludes to *Schuld* (guilt), but is more closely connected to acknowledging one's responsibility.

Reading the reflections of this great French philosopher, who lived for five years as a German war prisoner, is encouraging. He is aware of the public and scholarly discussion during the last decades, and he requests a different discourse. He can do this as a French person. He cannot be suspected of smoothing over history. He rather points to Hannah Arendt, the Jewish philosopher, recalling her urge to forgive and to promise (*Vergeben und Versprechen*) in The Human Condition. Arendt ponders the power to forgive as the decisive action to counter human irreversible deeds, and where she considers the power to promise as the remedy for unpredictability of an unknown future. She says:

The two faculties belong together in so far as one of them, forgiving, serves to undo the deeds of the past, . . . and the other, binding oneself through promises, serves to set up in the ocean of uncertainty . . . islands of security without which not even continuity . . . would be possible in the relationships between men [*sic*].⁷⁰

Ricoeur interprets both capacities as ways to overcome the paralyzing fixation of the past. He concludes that this understanding leads unavoidably to a political awareness for which

⁶⁹Ibid., 68.

⁷⁰Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 237.

he can find support in Arendt's conviction that forging and promising depend on "the presence and acting of others."⁷¹ Clearly, this chapter reveals the difficult history of public discourse in Germany on the *Shoah*. The three interpreters – Jaspers, Giordano, and Ricoeur – all recognize the complexities and problems. More important, they call for a new kind of discourse today.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I outlined a map of public discourse on the Holocaust in post-war Germany. Theoretical considerations of public and private space provided a frame in which to locate the public discourse and some of its difficulties in the flux between public and private space. Giordano, Krondorfer and Ricoeur each interpreted the discourse from the point of view of their particular expertise, thus highlighting complementary aspects of current issues. In this closing section, I will identify themes which emerged out of the historical review and their respective interpretations. Then I will weave them together and formulate some challenges for public discourse on the Holocaust today.

Themes

Three themes will be addressed: changes in public discourse, victim/victimizer dichotomy, and the movement beyond purely political, public discourse. As to the first theme, public discourse in Germany changed over the course of the last decades, not only in terms of its themes, but also in terms of who was involved and what were the driving energies in the background. Jaspers took a strong position for moral responsibility. The Bitburg clash and Jenninger's resignation revealed a situation strongly determined by forces from political parties and their agenda. Krondorfer observed a shift from a moral to a political agenda. The latest debates between the freelance writer Martin Walser and Ignaz Bubis, the representative of the Jewish community in Germany, received much media

⁷¹Ibid., 237.

attention. These discussions on what can be said publicly regarding the Nazi past also reveal aspects of the impasse in public discourse, which has become rigid ritualization. Martin Walser critiques it as "well worn rhetorical devotional exercises."⁷² Others interpret this differently, insisting on conditions of discourse as progress, because they leave behind the taboos and scandals of the 1980s.

A second major theme relates to victimization. Public discourse in Germany struggled desperately to come to terms with the victim/victimizer dichotomy. Germany as a nation had to take responsibility for the victimizer role, even while many Germans were and felt themselves to be victims. But in the context of the international community, German people had to acknowledge this heritage in public discourse. In order to uphold historic accuracy, the distinction between victim and victimizer cannot be overcome and dismissed. On the other hand, a dichotomizing discourse seems to have dangerous power of prescribing and inscribing roles young Germans and Jews are struggling with.⁷³ As Krondorfer has pointed out, the underlying ethos of the German and Jewish community (guilt and remembrance) influences the ways that even the third generation of former victimizer and survivors are interacting. Contemporary generations on both sides demand that there is more to their identity than the perpetrator/victim heritage.

The third theme is a movement beyond purely political, public discourse. As Tilman Moser and others observed, endeavors to come to terms with the Holocaust take place more and more, beyond the political sphere. One sees this movement in the media. The success of Spielberg's movie Schindler's List, the attention paid to the exhibition of the Hamburg Institute für Sozialforschung "War of Extermination: Atrocities of the

⁷²Lerke von Saalfeld, "Der Wahrheit verpflichtet? Wie Schriftsteller sich autobiographisch mit dem Holocaust auseinandersetzen" (Committed to truth? How writers autobiographically engage with the Holocaust), in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 21 Nov. 1998, sec. Wochenendbeilage, 49.

⁷³Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 28.

Wehrmacht 1941-1944," Victor Klemperer's journals and the media debates around Daniel Goldhagen's Hitler's Willing Executioners indicate that more and more "ordinary" people are willing to deal with National Socialism and its atrocities.

Challenges

Acknowledging the current impasse of public discourse, the following challenges can be named which might serve as bridges to the concerns of subsequent chapters.

Acknowledging the growing attention to discourse in the classic private space requires a shift in valuing and welcoming that movement. The first challenge is to welcome the shift to private space as a movement toward a relational space with new opportunities to work through and integrate the Nazi past in "ordinary" relations. Moving beyond the limitations of political discourse might actually contribute to overcoming the split between public and private in the future. Healing dynamics in the private space hopefully will impact the public space by permeating its boundaries.

The second challenge is to find and foster areas where public discourse is already extending and reaching out to new ways of engaging the Nazi past in the flux of public/private space. Lerke von Saalfeld did research on some writers and poets who are able to cope autobiographically with the Holocaust. They illustrate what this move beyond political discourse in public space might reveal. Lerke von Saalfeld acknowledges that the literature is able to tune a much more honest melody because it is a non-euphemistic melody.

The third challenge is to create ecumenical space. This idea emerges from the ecumenical movement of the Christian churches. Konrad Raiser, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), formulated the challenge to "open ecumenical space" in response to great tension with the Orthodox Churches that are about to leave the community of the world churches because of disagreement with many issues important to the WCC. Frozen communication patterns might demand a rethinking of ecumenical space.

Raiser seems to challenge everyone to rethink fundamentally the location and conditions of processes by which ecumenical dialogue occurs. Can the WCC go beyond the hitherto accepted Western parliamentary communication style? Building on Raiser's question, I see the challenge to a frozen discourse in Germany, to open that prescribed space, and to envision new conditions and locations where and how a more constructive communication on the Holocaust can occur.

At the beginning of this chapter we reflected on models of public space. Mary Hess uses the metaphor of ground in her search to unlearn racism as a white religious educator. She says, "We white people need to place ourselves on uneven ground, on lower ground, and on uncertain ground."⁷⁴ In order to deal with, and unlearn, oppressive structures, the oppressors need to take the chance to make a choice, as Katharina von Kellenbach explained. Applied to the situation in Germany, people should be encouraged to make a choice and leave the well-defined public discourse on Holocaust, taking the risk to place themselves on "lower ground," classically, private space. Dealing with the perpetrator heritage in the context of one's family history means indeed to place oneself on uneven ground. Uncertain ground can cause enormous anxiety, but seems to me the more promising ground on which destructive patterns of the perpetrator heritage can be more easily addressed and resolved.

⁷⁴ Mary E. Hess, "White Religious Educators and Unlearning Racism: Can We Find a Way?" Religious Education 93, no. 1 (winter 1998): 127.

CHAPTER 4

Psychological Themes

Illuminate Conditions of Private Discourse

The last chapter delineated landmarks and interpretations of public discourse on the Holocaust in post-war Germany. Chapter 3 also identified the challenge of moving beyond the current limitations of political discourse, paying attention to the healing dynamics that can occur in private space by fostering private discourse. This present chapter opens the exploration of private discourse from psychological perspectives (Chapter 4), feminist perspectives (Chapter 5), and religious challenges in Chapter 6. Chapters 7 and 8 introduce ways in which private discourse can be renewed. In this chapter, we will survey five themes that have emerged in social science research, including psychological, sociological, anthropological and educational studies of the influence of National Socialism on subsequent generations. The literature does not focus solely on women, but the concluding section includes an application of those insights to women's situation. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the internal dynamics of post-Holocaust life for Germans, thus amplifying the dynamics of public discourse discussed in the previous chapter.

Five Studies

The particular research selected for this chapter includes "Inability to Mourn" by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich (1967); the "Inability to Ask Questions" by Nadine Hauer (1994); "Psychoanalysis with Parental Bondage Relations" by Anita Eckstaedt (1989); "Collective Silence" by Heimannsberg and Schmidt (1993); and "Something Went Wrong at the Roots. . ." by Dan Bar-On (1997). Various criteria influenced this selection. In Chapter 2 presented three original and recently completed field studies aligned with the very core of the thesis. Chapter 4 pays particular attention to previously published research in which this subject is recognized and addressed at the level of scholarly discourse. The

samples represent a greater breadth (regionally, professionally, ages, gender), and the studies were published during a period of 30 years 1967 (Mitscherlich) to 1997 (Dan Bar-On). Taken together, they employ expertise from various fields of social sciences. Furthermore, these studies represent reflections related to a variety of "private" settings occurring in large groups (Mitscherlich), individual therapeutic sessions (Eckstaedt and Heimannsberg), and also more focused and homogeneous groups such as the German psychoanalytical section. The researchers come also from different psychological schools such as depth psychology (Eckstaedt), humanist psychology (Heimannsberg), political psychology (Hauer) and social psychology (Mitscherlich). Finally, the studies address psychological dynamics regarding the first generation (Mitscherlich), the second generation (Heimannsberg and Hauer, partially also Dan Bar-On) and third generation (Dan Bar-On). These studies are, thus, selected as representative samples of existing research, corresponding to the variables of various disciplines, covering a length of time and utilizing different psychological approaches. For these reasons, themes and reflections emerging from Chapter 4 are intended to illuminate and carry on the discussion already begun in Chapter 2 by identifying similar results, questioning contradictory findings, and raising additional issues from a breadth of research.

Each study will be described in such a way that the social context, method, and major findings become visible. At the end of this chapter, insights and issues related to the findings in Chapter 2 will be addressed.

The Inability to Mourn (Mitscherlich)

Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich are trained social psychologists who explore psychological processes in large groups.¹ They understand their work as contributing to

¹Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern: Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens (The inability to mourn: Foundations of collective behavior) (1967; reprint, München: R. Piper Verlag, 1970), 13ff.

political progress by means of psychological interpretation. This publication was part of a social-psychological and social-medical research project, including international observations. It was written in the mid 1960s. Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich were among the first bold voices to interpret psychological dynamics in the young west-German democracy. They are committed to freedom of expression and understand their effort as unraveling obstructed behavior.

The most prominent observation of the Mitscherlichs is the absence of mourning among German people following the national catastrophe. Since the object of loss was a communal experience, disturbance in the work of mourning inhibits the development not only of individuals, but also of groups and collectives. Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich assume that a relation exists between the political and social climate in Federal Republic of Germany (FDR) and the persistent blockade of memories, in particular the denial of emotions that is involved in repressing the past.

Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich felt that they faced organized opposition in regard to working through the National Socialist past with its unbearable burden of guilt.² The conclusions of their social psychological analysis are not based on systematic explorations but rather in accidental observations, that means wherever they noticed behavior which transgressed the code for individual behavior but frequently represented a more general social reaction. In particular, they elaborate on two reactions. First, a "defense mechanism against the Nazi past" and, second, a lethargy observable in the whole political and social organism. They observe a severe indifference, easy to identify through a lack of curiosity. Without curiosity, people miss politically effective new ideas and, as a consequence, reconnect themselves to National Socialism, a system under which most citizens agreed with the ideas of racism and social hierarchy. The Mitscherlichs are

²Ibid., 10.

convinced that, "after the delusion of solving social problems in the manner proposed by *Endlösung*³, we cannot expect that the return to everyday life happens without any effort."⁴

In addition, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich explain the prospering fifties and sixties as "libidinal energy cumulating in the economic market."⁵ Instead of mourning the loss of libidinal objects, such as the *Führer* and the national socialist worldview which many had adopted, they shut off the past and focused on *Wiederaufbau* (reconstruction) primarily in economical terms. At the beginning, people had no awareness of a need to integrate the disaster of the past into public education, particularly as a way to deal with the brutal and aggressive inclinations in the national community. The general perceptions of reality became limited. Even more influential, the Mitscherlichs observe a split between the Third Reich and everyday life after 1945; people apparently could not face the fact that millions of people were killed in the name of the German people and are therefore unable to work through this unbearable truth in the technical psychoanalytic sense.

The Mitscherlichs drew strongly on psychoanalytic theory to explain the dynamics of trauma. Working through trauma requires a sequence of steps; in Freudian terms, these steps are identified as remembering, repeating, and working through.⁶ Freud pointed out that remembering frequently can be quite difficult since the mechanisms of resistance within the human psyche function to protect memories which have been censored as unacceptable and are therefore forgotten and made inaccessible to memory. The

³*Endlösung* means final solution. In 1942, at the so-called Wannsee conference, the Nazi leadership determined to "solve" the "Jewish issue" by annihilating the European Jewry.

⁴*Ibid.*, 22.

⁵*Ibid.*, 23.

⁶Sigmund Freud, "Erinnern, Wiederholen, und Durcharbeiten" (Remembering, repeating, working through), in *Gesammelte Werke X*. (London: Imago Publishing, 1946), 126-36.

compulsion to repeat allows remembering through an active redoing of the content of memory without being aware of that. Freud suggested, then, a third step of working through the resistance, which will allow individuals freely to recall forgotten memories. Clinical work in psychoanalysis shows that these steps foster healing. This third step of working through is much harder to do for a community. During the 1960s, the Mitscherlichs did not know individual clients who suffered from repressed memories. Instead, the collective enjoyed an economic growth unseen in previous history, which was considered an "economic miracle." During this same time, the military and moral victors over the Third Reich were involved in wars such as Algeria and Vietnam and, in the course of those military actions, were themselves committing inhumane acts.⁷

The Mitscherlichs discovered a separation between convenient memories and uncomfortable memories that require a huge amount of emotional energy. They saw an unanswered challenge for each individual in the society to become aware of his and her self-deception. What they observed instead is infantile self-protection in regard to real and incredible guilt. According to the authors, the most important defense mechanism they identified was found in a withdrawal of energy from all objects that precipitated enthusiasm during the Third Reich, such as volunteering to bring sacrifices for the *Führer*; this led to a faded and pale memory of these twelve years. The benefits of erecting a collective taboo are numerous.

In sum, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich certify that the inability to mourn the loss of a leader can be traced back to an enormous burden of guilt, shame, and anxiety. This kind of defense is facilitated through a withdrawal of libidinal energy. Later, those mechanisms in Germany also prevented the mourning of *Mitmenschen* (literally co-humans) who had been killed; the Nazi time had turned into an unreal period

⁷ Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, 25.

of past history. The Mitscherlichs do not criticize the reactions immediately after 1945, but rather the continuing failure to relate to that history.

The Inability to Ask (Hauer)

A second study explores implications of National Socialism for democracy today, in particular, the inability to raise and formulate questions regarding the status quo. In her research on bystanders (*Mitläufer*, literally fellow travelers), Nadine Hauer focuses on the second generation of Germans and Austrians whose parents were contemporaries of National Socialism⁸. She assumes that the next generations are still psychologically damaged by the NS system. Trained as a political scientist, her psychological research was done under the auspices of the Vienna depth psychologist Professor Dr. Hans Strotzka. The connecting link between political science and psychology can be found in political psychology, which has already been established in the FDR, Switzerland, and Italy, and focuses on political occurrences from a psychological point of view. Even though Hauer uses her research to ponder sociopolitical implications, I will use her psychological findings for reflections on the psychological situation in post-Holocaust Germany.

Hauer contends that more and more people are willing to deal with the victims, resistance fighters, and perpetrators of National Socialism. For her, it is quite remarkable that the "fellow travelers," who comprised the majority of the people during the Third Reich, have not yet received scholarly attention.

At the beginning of her delineation, Hauer identifies some hypotheses that shaped her research. Hauer is building on Almuth Massing's work as a psychoanalyst in Göttingen,⁹ especially the idea that an essential aspect of the NS generation is the fear of

⁸ Nadine Hauer, Die Mitläufer Oder Die Unfähigkeit zu fragen: Auswirkungen des Nationalsozialismus für die Demokratie von heute (The fellow travelers or The inability to ask: Implications of National Socialism for democracy today) (Opladen, Germany: Leske and Budrich, 1994).

⁹ Almuth Massing co-authored in 1982 a book on Die Mehrgenerationen-

talking about experiences. This is a lesson learned from the NS ideology: "If I say what I think, see, know and feel, then I will be punished." That fear continues to influence peoples' minds, long after the collapse of the NS terror system. Alice Miller provides a rationale for this by saying that German children accept the taboo of their parents. According to this pattern, it is assumed that questions regarding the NS time are improper and will be "punished" by the parents.¹⁰ Another reason why the NS generation did not want to talk about the past may be found in the actual awareness of injustice and the fear of losing the security of parental authority. Even during the student riots of 1968, when the next generation dared to accuse their parents with "you are guilty," the only defense offered was: "We didn't do anything, we didn't know anything." This evolved into a public confrontation, but did not lead to retrieving suppressed memories or facing hidden taboos. After the war, the natural conflicts between parents and children received the added dimension of children accusing parents of complicity in the Nazi tyranny.

Depending on the amount of unresolved conflict material, each generation passes on a different perspective. First generation - second generation tension may revolve around the conflict of "you are guilty - not us." The tension between the second and third generations results in a lack of communication. Because the second generation could not force their parents to admit their involvement in that period, the second generation now want to hide the guilt they feel, and thus they choose silence to avoid having the issue raised by the third generation. The following generation still carries the unresolved taboos. Nadine Hauer based her research on the assumption that the taboo of the NS time is intrinsically connected with the day-to-day silence of the majority of people during the Third Reich, the so-called fellow-traveler. Therefore, she tried, through interviews, to

Familietherapie (The several generations family-therapy).

¹⁰Hauer, 15. See also: Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983).

approach the NS daily life via the communication occurring in families. She is convinced that intra family communication resembles the way families treat societal taboos. Conversely, she concludes that societal taboos influence the formation of individual identity.

Shortly before the fall of the Berlin wall, Nadine Hauer conducted 125 in-depth interviews with diverse Austrian people and about 25 diverse people from Germany (December 1987 until spring 1989). She describes her research method as in-depth interviews with an ethno-psychoanalytic approach. Those persons represented a wide range of professions, and included both women and men who came from rural, urban, and suburban backgrounds. Most of them were children of "fellow-travelers"; their parents were not active Nazis. In her analysis, she focused on the 'how' of communication and identified four types of communication, emerging out of the 150 interviews: MA as monologue-authoritarian; EA as emotional-authoritarian; FR as formal-rationalizing; and UDN as subliminal - diffuse - foggy (*unterschwellig - diffus - Nebel*). This last type of communication UDN was the most frequently observed. In particular, women used that kind of communication -- in family conversation and in referring to the societal taboo of discussing NS daily life.

Silence Passed Through Generations (Eckstaedt)

What kind of dynamics are accountable for the phenomenon that, 55 years and two generations after the end of the Third Reich, silence (regarding their National Socialist past) is still common place in family histories ? In Nationalsozialismus in der "zweiten Generation": Psychoanalyse von Hörigkeitsverhältnissen, Anita Eckstaedt addresses the phenomenon of silence about the past and the implications of silence for the next generation.¹¹ By drawing on her extensive professional expertise as a psychoanalyst,

¹¹Anita Eckstaedt, Nationalsozialismus in der "zweiten Generation": Psychoanalyse von Hörigkeitsverhältnissen (National Socialism in the second generation: Psychoanalysis

Eckstaedt interprets the heritage of silence as dependency relations. According to Eckstaedt's observations of her clinical case studies, the silence of the parents results in denial of past reality, which is conveyed to the children. Children get involved in detaching reality from the past and – simultaneously – developing a parental bondage which is quite difficult to access in therapeutic work. She explains the generation of parental bondage and loyalty as a narcissistic defense mechanism.

Eckstaedt also reflects on the historical circumstances of psychoanalysis as a national discipline during those years and provides an intriguing historical overview of the rapprochement of the German psychoanalytical section after WWII in addressing the theme of National Socialism. She recalls the three pillars of the analytical process, stated by Sigmund Freud as *Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten* (Remembering, Repeating, and Working through). Anita Eckstaedt reformulates this sequence as *Wiederholen, Erinnern, Durcharbeiten* (Repeating, Remembering, and Working through). In this reformulation, Eckstaedt integrates her observations that sometimes only repetition allows to remember what the unconsciousness has pushed away.¹² The psychological dynamics of resistance easily cover up the process of remembering, but the painful memories still remain.

This dynamic of resistance could be observed regarding the development of psychoanalysis in Germany after 1945: the recent history of the German psychoanalytic association shows that it had to overcome its own suppression of the NS period. In 1951, a small group of German analysts rejoined the international analysts at a too early stage, falsely assuming that German resistance and their own distance from Nazi atrocities could be equated, which would mean they could now belong to the side of the persecuted since resistance groups had been severely persecuted.

of bondage relations) (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989).

¹²*Ibid.*, 9.

Only decades later, the emotional implications of this untimely joining surfaced and thus became a challenge: In 1977, the members of the International Association voted against Berlin as the location for the 1981 conference. In 1980, the Middle-European conference in Bamberg/Germany, for the first time, addressed the psychological implications of persecution and war under the title "Wiederkehr von Krieg und Verfolgung in Psychoanalysen" (Recurrence of War and Persecution in Psychoanalysis.) After the "no" in 1977, Bamberg finally began the process of dealing with the past. Eckstaedt argues that the Bamberg conference became a catalyst, providing the stage for *ein Wiederholen durch Inszenieren und Agieren* (repeating through stage-managing and acting). Eckstaedt evaluates this conference in Bamberg as the one which allowed the German section to acknowledge its own history and to start to work on it. According to Eckstaedt, Jewish colleagues, such as Hillel Klein from Jerusalem, were instrumental in beginning the search for a German identity in the midst of guilt and shame, which German analysts carried consciously or unconsciously. In 1985, the 34th international psychoanalytical conference convened for the first time again in Germany. The Nazi-phenomenon theme was unavoidable. In this conference, the term "apocalyptic fantasies" was coined to address the unfathomable evil unleashed during the Third Reich and to suggest a psychological origin for the incredible destructiveness which operated without any sense of its own injustice.

Eckstaedt also points to the fact that during the 1980s, analysts began to pay more attention to the victims of the NS terror system. In her effort to understand more fully the post-war dynamics in Germany, Eckstaedt finds that the suffering of mothers and children during the war was mostly overlooked. The violation or death of a parent or sibling was already hard. Many people experienced flight or expulsion, but this was not considered as having undergone an unusual trauma or as deserving the particular attention required by a traumatic experience. This denial of trauma undermined the search for meaning. These and other re-interpretations fostered a growing readiness for defense mechanisms among the

parents' generation. Eckstaedt learned to understand this process as having a second function, namely, to cover the simultaneous occurrence of remembering the Third Reich. Two rationales supported this interpretation: the lost war with its collapse of the Third Reich and the eager *Wiederaufbau* (reconstruction) of the country.

Eckstaedt was intrigued with the reappearance of denied and split-off contents. Observing several layers of defense mechanisms, it was difficult to understand what was behind those complex phenomena.¹³ For her, two Jewish colleagues were quite instrumental in expanding her understanding. A Jewish colleague once observed one of Eckstaedt's patients, "That is the Hitler in your patient." This interpretation troubled Eckstaedt but pushed her to overcome some of her own limitations in understanding.¹⁴

For Eckstaedt, Melanie Klein's concept of destructive behavior provided an avenue to cope with hitherto untreatable cases. Patients' stories indicated an unknown burden and vague sorrow, related to the personal fate of their parents, who were adults during the Third Reich and who had experienced the war, the collapse, and the reconstruction. Eckstaedt assumes that this prolonging of psychological horror also embraces the continuation of Hitler's power as a role model and his unrestricted claims to authority. The patients were shaped by forces which led them to treat others like they were treated. She calls this a typical, ego-syntonic attitude.¹⁵ Since the parents were exposed to totalitarianism, Eckstaedt interprets the second generation as transmitting a disease which causes deformation in the patient's psyche. Usually, parents remained silent, restrained by the ideology which led to the war. Eckstaedt regrets the lack of confession and remorse and sees them as decisive factors in the failure of constructive changes after 1945.

¹³Ibid., 10.

¹⁴Ibid., 14.

¹⁵Ibid., 17.

By what psychological process does the second generation become bearers of unsolved conflicts? Eckstaedt coined the term of 'syntonic object manipulation' in order to describe the way assignments are passed on from one generation to the next.¹⁶ This passing on is made possible by denying inner and outer realities. The object relation turns into a bondage relation. The other, namely the next generation, is 'made pregnant' with the desire of the parent. He or she is allowed to grow only through response to that desire. Individuation becomes impossible.

Building on Melanie Klein's thoughts, Gottfried Appy describes silence as the main symptom of the first generation, which is supposed to protect the ego against unbearable conflicts. Silence also shapes the defense mechanisms of other people. Referring to that silence, Eckstaedt utilizes Appy's term "*Sprachlosigkeit*" (speechlessness) to underline the nonverbal but still controlling power of silence.¹⁷ She explains the passing-on process as a defense mechanism that requires the assistance of another object, in this case the second generation. The passing on process results in unnamed, unmourned fragments residing in the next generation, and these fragments often appear as quite inaccessible. From her case studies, Eckstaedt derives a theoretical reflection: she interprets the "too-much" (*ein Zuviel*) as unbearable for a weak ego, which thus splits-off and produces a place for the split off fragment.

With her work, Eckstaedt wants to strengthen resistance against processes of alienation and to foster individuality among the second generation. She is convinced that the second generation has to become aware of these processes; otherwise they will perpetuate the vicious cycle by passing it on to the third generation. Therefore, she envisions that the individual carrier of narcissistic fantasies learns to take responsibility by apprehending, naming, and connecting to his or her history. For Eckstaedt, this is also the

¹⁶Ibid., 21.

¹⁷Ibid., 22.

way to locate oneself in the history of one's parents, "an act simultaneously of remembering and renouncing, of confessing and regretting."¹⁸

Legacy of Shame (Heimannsberg/Schmidt)

In addition to silence, shame has also been the focus of research. In this section we will explore the silence surrounding the Holocaust in Germany as deeply attached to the hidden struggle with Germany's legacy of shame. In 1993, Barbara Heimannsberg and Christof J. Schmidt published 13 essays on Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame in English translation¹⁹. The authors provide intriguing and compelling material concerning therapists and clients who are still struggling with the heritage of the genocide in Germany. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christof J. Schmidt describe the psychological symptoms of the Nazi heritage as trained psychoanalysts at the Fritz Perls Institute in Düsseldorf, Germany. Their work is a branch of humanistic psychology. In 1988, in their introduction to the German edition, Heimannsberg and Schmidt still acknowledge that "a widespread symptomatic pattern today is the silence within families."²⁰ They also concede, "[I]n psychotherapy there is a tendency to blind oneself to ethical categories because of our understandable reluctance to indoctrinate or to moralize."²¹ They question this tendency by pointing to the necessity of ethical consideration as "...a background against which the acceptable can be integrated and the unacceptable can be rejected..." in order to work through the clients' experiences.²²

¹⁸Ibid., 24.

¹⁹Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, eds. The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993).

²⁰Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, "Psychological Symptoms of the Nazi Heritage: Introduction to the German Edition," in The Collective Silence, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 3.

²¹Ibid., 4.

²²Ibid., 6.

On the following pages, I will discuss three of these essays, authored by Margarete Hecker, Irene Wielpütz, and Barbara Heimannsberg, since they address family dynamics, a theme that has already emerged in Field Study I, II, and III (Chapter 2) and most obviously the place of private discourse. These authors approach the subject through family reconstruction, psychotherapy, and specialized training at the Fritz Perls Institute. Furthermore, Wielpütz speaks from the Jewish survivor experience, and Heimannsberg provides a summarizing psychodynamic view of the Nazi past. She also puts into language the crucial distinction between knowing the past and relating to that past as an integral part of one's identity.

Confronting the Legacy through Family Reconstruction.²³ This section explores the legacy of shame being addressed by confronting the past through family reconstruction. Margarete Hecker, a teacher and trainer in social work for many years, with an emphasis on family counseling, worked for many years on "family reconstruction," a therapeutic method developed by Virginia Satir as a tool to address issues of family origin. Hecker employs "family reconstruction" as a means to recognize one's entanglement in one's family of origin by learning "to know one's place in the system of one's family of origin and to know where closeness, divisions, boundaries, and blockages lie in the contacts with one's parents, siblings, and grandparents."²⁴

In her conclusions, Hecker perceives a connection between "the flood of propaganda speeches during the Third Reich"²⁵ and the speechlessness that abounded after 1945. She writes, "Any attempt to begin a clarifying conversation froze in the face of the incomprehensible dimensions of the crimes in which so many had been involved,

²³Margarete Hecker, "Family Reconstruction in Germany: An Attempt to Confront the Past," in *The Collective Silence*, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 73-94.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 75.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 88.

knowingly or unknowingly."²⁶ She calls it an "emotional paralysis," which did not allow the next generation to ask questions. Undergirded by other reports, she points to the lack of emotional space to express rage, anger, sadness, or anxiety right after the war. Those who had survived the air raids, hunger, or returned from the battlefield, needed all their energy and creativity to make a living in the destroyed country. She contends that only the immediate surface of reality was tackled. The expectations for a better future were delegated to the next generation, to their children.

The second generation, by not asking questions, supported the silence and contributed to the process of suppression. In her opinion, families pay a high price for this alleged loyalty: they do not know one another, they are cut off from their feelings, they may feel that they are living under an invisible burden.

Hecker addresses one of the most compelling starting points for one's journey to deal with the NS past: one's family of origin. Björn Krondorfer used this departure-point in the exchange program with the third generation - a powerful door opener where young Germans and young Jews started to relate to one another.

The Difficulty of Speaking the Unspeakable.²⁷ This section illustrates the difficulty that descendants of the victims have in breaking through the legacy of their parents. The volume Collective Silence included the perspective of Irene Wielpütz, a Jewish psychotherapist in private practice in Cologne. She was born in Bogota, Colombia, in 1947. Her German Jewish parents had escaped the Holocaust by immigrating in 1933. They returned to Germany in 1957.

²⁶Ibid., 88.

²⁷Irene Wielpütz "The Difficulty of Speaking the Unspeakable: How an Article entitled 'The Nazi Past in Psychotherapy' Was Never Written," in The Collective Silence, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Smith (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 171-94.

Her perspective is an important reminder of those who were the primary sufferers in the terror regime of National Socialism. Her perspective indicates that patterns of silence must be overcome within both the victim and perpetrator communities.

Wielpütz allows the reader to be part of her struggle to come to terms with her Jewish heritage and to live her life in post-Holocaust Germany. In September 1987, Wielpütz observes that books and films written on the NS past are coming from the second generation. She wonders if the first generation is "delegating the talking, the writing, the filming, the rage, the fear, the mourning to the children?"²⁸ Wielpütz is convinced that all children of people who collaborated in one way or another during that time "must bear the burden today if their parents haven't taken it upon themselves."²⁹ In her opinion, a whole generation would have to face their parents' issues of fear, guilt, repressed feelings. Wielpütz asks how the next generation can work to lift the burden, if they cannot name the roots from which they come? She herself is searching for her roots.

For three years, Wielpütz's struggle was deeply impacted by the sudden death of her mother and the terminal illness of her father. Even on his deathbed, she could not breach his wall of silence, "this invisible wall between us, which allowed the unspeakable to remain unspoken."³⁰ Reflecting on her desire to reconnect to her roots, she states, "roots also can find their way under walls and can come together. There, underneath, they are and they remain knotted together. I can feel them more than ever."³¹ "Careful tending of her roots" meant for Wielpütz that she would write six letters to her grandfather who died before they had left Bogota. He never had wanted to return to Germany. She hoped he would understand her struggle. Once she noted, "How can I explain to anybody that the

²⁸Ibid., 173.

²⁹Ibid., 177.

³⁰Ibid., 182.

³¹Ibid., 182.

past which is overtaking me now is not my own past but rather that of my parents and my unknown relatives?"³² Furthermore, since her parents' families were quite assimilated and did not live a religious life, she always felt that this raised the compelling question to non-Jewish Germans that the Holocaust was less a massacre of Jews, and more the killing of neighbors and friends. She even uses the term "fratricide" as a more appropriate term than genocide to describe those atrocities committed by Germans against Germans. Again and again, she speaks about the fear and sorrow which at times overwhelm her. Wielpütz assumes a deep connection between her call to live in Germany and the attachment to her forebears' past.

Critical Dialogue between Family and National Legacies.³³ Acquiring a true identity in the midst of a legacy a shame, family and national legacies need to enter into a critical dialogue. Elaborating her psychodynamic view on the Nazi past, Barbara Heimannsberg recalls that the question of national identity emerged again after the reunification of East- and West-Germany in 1990. In particular, East German youth have to struggle with those severe social, political, economic changes and, therefore, a collective need for identity can be assumed. How is a collective identity to be designed? Barbara Heimannsberg is building on Jürgen Habermas, who stated in 1986:

Our life's form is tied to that of our parents and grandparents through a web of familial, local, and also intellectual traditions which can hardly be untangled - thus through an historical milieu which has made us into what we are today. No one can steal away out of this milieu, because our identity as Germans, as well as individuals, is indissolubly enmeshed in it.³⁴

³²Ibid., 185.

³³Barbara Heimannsberg, "The Work of Remembering: A Psychodynamic View of the Nazi Past as It Exists in Germany Today," in The Collective Silence, eds. Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 163-70.

³⁴Jürgen Habermas, "Eine Art Schadensabwicklung. Die apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung" (Finalizing the damages:

She suggests that "true identity" requires both — self-acceptance and self-construction understood as a "critical ownership of our own history."³⁵ In the context of a broken history, how can self-esteem be nourished? Heimannsberg is convinced that self-esteem can grow through mutuality, which includes also the need to tolerate ambivalence, and welcomes responsibility as an integral part of one's self-understanding. The ability to relate can be fostered because encouraging experiences of interdependence are already pointing in that direction.

Heimannsberg proposes a concept of collective identity which departs clearly from the conservative one that employs a narcissistically colored picture of history. Her concept of collective identity is derived from a critical analysis of history, allowing space for doubts. She is convinced that a plain knowledge of history contains a small part of one's identity. More decisive is "one's relationship to history and especially to that part of history which one recognizes as one's own."³⁶ Therefore, historical knowledge must be integrated into one's psychic system, an expression of one's emotional maturity. She especially highlights the capacity to come to grips with ambivalence.

One of the main reasons a collective critical national identity has not yet been established has a historical - psychological aspect to it: the separation into two states in 1945 (Federal Republic Germany and German Democratic Republic) which allowed the former GDR to distance itself from the Fascist state and to glue its heritage to the FRG, while the FRG identified itself with the rebuilding and economic reconstruction. Heimannsberg ironically remarks that in both states "narcotizing identifications and the warding off of mortification and painful truth won out."³⁷

Apologetic tendencies in the writing of contemporary history), *Die Zeit* (July 11, 1986). Cited in English translation by Heimannsberg, "The Work of Remembering," 164.

³⁵Heimannsberg, 164.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 166.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 167.

The following dynamics contributed to what can be called historically fragmented memory: fragmented historical knowledge, a relativizing rationale explaining NS primarily in terms of totalitarianism, the successful economic growth in western Germany, and the fading connections between attitudes, behavior, and the Nazi era. By what means can detachment and fragmentation from history be overcome? Heimannsberg suggests that family memories should be brought into the context in relation to a specific historical development; that dialogue is necessary between family memory and history. This kind of work, the work of remembering, will precipitate ambivalent feelings and conflicts, but "one must stick with the tension of opposites which arises out of this process."³⁸ The second generation has not been freed by lack of knowledge of what their forebears did. The opposite has occurred: the silence of past decades contributed to further traumatization.

Heimannsberg points to the voices of those who were extinguished during the Third Reich: "The narration and memories which are colored with the brush of Nazism must be broadened through the memory and experience of those into whose world annihilation broke. . . their world is also part of our identity."³⁹ This integration constitutes the legacy of shame.

Something Wrong at the Roots (Bar-On)

This section elaborates how the Holocaust heritage deeply shapes the identity formation of subsequent generations. In 1997, Dan Bar-On, Konrad Brendler and A. Paul Hare edited Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln: Identitätsformation deutscher und israelischer Jugendlicher im Schatten des Holocaust.⁴⁰ From this volume, two themes

³⁸Ibid., 169.

³⁹Ibid., 170.

⁴⁰Dan Bar-On, Konrad Brendler and A. Paul Hare, eds., Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln: Identitätsformation deutscher und israelischer Jugendlicher im Schatten des Holocaust (Something went wrong at the roots: Identity formation of German and Israeli youth under the shadow of the Holocaust), (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997).

will receive attention. First, we attend to Dan Bar-On's findings regarding the second generation's stages of integration, and, second, to a study of the third generation. The latter is a three-year German-Israeli research and intervention project among 1100 youth in Israel and Germany, inquiring into the psychosocial impact of the NS past on the third generation.

Focusing first on the second generation, Dan Bar-On conducted interviews in Germany between 1985 and 1987 with children of perpetrators during the Third Reich. He then identified stages through which members of the second generation move as they attempt to integrate knowledge about their fathers into the development of their own moral self.

Bar-On described "the process of sorting out difficult issues as an alternative to unconditional identification with parents (while suppressing acknowledgment of parents' atrocious acts) and as an alternative to total dissociation from them on moral grounds."⁴¹ Bar-On was referring to S. Novey's elaboration, suggesting that therapeutic work of "working through" is similar to the process and work of mourning. Bar-On departed from original psychoanalytic theory, which stated that a completion is needed to the successful working-through process. Bar-On pointed to the importance and challenge of "living with the pain of loss rather than being able to let it go."⁴² According to Bar-On, the five stages are: (1) acquiring factual knowledge of the Holocaust; (2) grasping the meaning of those facts; (3) emotionally responding to facts and their meaning; (4) building on those responses and developing an attitude toward the Holocaust; (5) acting as a moral self by

⁴¹Ibid., 229.

⁴²Dan Bar-On, "Children of Perpetrators of the Holocaust: Working Through One's Moral Self," *Psychiatry* 53 (1990): 230.

integrating the cognitive, emotional and attitudinal dimensions of one's Holocaust understanding.⁴³

Searching for a relational approach to Holocaust teaching, Dan Bar-On's stages are helpful in mapping out a process which contains cognitive, emotional, behavioral and moral dimensions. In regard to our purposes, however, Bar-On's findings cannot be employed directly. Several reasons can be named. Since the mid 1980s, German society has experienced changes in public awareness through various books, films, memorials in regard to the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II; in 1996 was the media debate on Goldhagen's book Hitler's Willing Executioners. Furthermore, Bar-On focused specifically on perpetrator fathers and their children, at a time when mothers involvement in the Third Reich had not received appropriate research attention nor public awareness. Bar-On, for example, does not indicate the gender ratio of his interviewees and how their socialization might have impacted their working-through journey.

My main interest in Bar-On's work is sparked in regard to which underlying dynamics foster the move from one stage to the next? How does one proceed from knowing the facts to grasping the meaning? In order to unravel the underlying dynamics, I suggest a search for moments of transformation which might help to explain the move from stage to stage. Moments of transformation were identified among participants of Krondorfer's exchange programs, presented in Chapter 2, and more attention will be given to this in Chapter 8.

The second aspect of Dan Bar-On's research involves searching for an undamaged identity among the third generation. For the most part, contemporaries of the Third Reich withdrew from intergenerational dialogue. Young people did not receive enlightened knowledge about the Nazi past in their family of origin but rather in formal education,

⁴³Ibid., 229-45.

public schools, and more precisely in mandatory class of history. The approach to the Nazi period and the Holocaust was primarily designed by historians in a very scholarly, passive, and distant language. This kind of teaching did not take into account burning questions of young people.

Dan Bar-On and his research team use the metaphor of a double wall to describe the complex difficulty of approaching the topic of the Holocaust. In his opinion, the first generation of victims, as well as perpetrators, erected a kind of wall to lock in those immediate experiences. The second generation acquired a sensitivity for their parents' defense mechanisms and thus seem to have erected their own wall in responding to their parents' inhibitions. In the event someone started to open "a window" in one wall, he or she usually encountered the second wall. In Dan Bar-On's perspective, just conveying information does not interrupt the system of the "double wall". A new pedagogical method is required, taking into account the psychological dimensions. Dan Bar-On understands this task as assisting students "to respond emotionally to information and to integrate it into their own identity and biography."⁴⁴ Bar-On observed emotional ballast⁴⁵ among students in Germany and Israel. In Germany, this ballast illustrates how students are unable to establish an undamaged identity distinct from the perpetrator generation.

The research team identified three assumptions about how young people connect current social and political topics with the Holocaust. (1) In Israel, the meaning of the Holocaust is overevaluated (total relevance); (2) in Germany, the meaning of the Holocaust is underevaluated (no relevance); and (3) a more differentiated opinion "partial relevance" can also be found. In both countries the team conducted research to find this

⁴⁴Bar-On, et al., *Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln*, 11.

⁴⁵Emotional ballast (*unbewältigter Ballast*) refers to "waste" with which one has not yet come to terms.

"partial relevance." Their questionnaires and in-depth interviews built on the concept of specific stages that characterized the process of coming to terms with the Holocaust.⁴⁶

In one aspect of this German-Israeli project, the Wuppertal research presented the first non-clinical systematic study on identity and NS history in regard to the third generation.⁴⁷ Twenty-two interviews with youth from West-Germany revealed that "the confrontation with the atrocities of their forbears and the testimonies of human extermination during the NS time presents a crisis in the socialization of adolescents."⁴⁸ This research unearthed that the generation of grandchildren is still closely attached to the perpetrators, bystanders, and onlookers and therefore react with similar shattering of their self-esteem as did the first generation. In 1989, a quantitative research among 1130 students resulted in the following analysis in regard to emotional reactions in remembering the Holocaust:⁴⁹ 65% felt shame when the mass killing was addressed, 41% felt guilty, 50% felt somehow paralyzed, and 68% experienced anxiety for the future.

Drawing on twenty interviews with students in Berlin majoring in pedagogy, Gertrud Hardtmann pondered the educational implications for prospective teaching.⁵⁰ She presumed that the second and third generation do have some knowledge of National Socialism and the Holocaust, due to efforts of teachers and journalists. Attempts to come

⁴⁶ Dan Bar-On, "Children of Perpetrators of the Holocaust," 229-45.

⁴⁷ Konrad Brendler, "Die NS-Geschichte als Sozialisationsfaktor und Identitätsballast der Enkelgeneration" (The NS history as a factor in socialisation and identity ballast for the grandchildren generation), in Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln, eds. Dan Bar-On, Konrad Brendler, and A. Paul Hare (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997), 53.

⁴⁸ Brendler, 53.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 54.

⁵⁰ Gertrud Hardtmann, "Auf der Suche nach einer unbeschädigten Identität. Die dritte Generation in Deutschland" (Searching for an undamaged identity. The third generation in Germany), in Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln, eds. Dan Bar-On, Helmut Brendler, and A. Paul Hare, (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997), 105-36.

to terms with the Holocaust are only possible if basic information is taught. The method of teaching is decisive. Those interviews revealed that many children experienced a shock when confronted with Holocaust material in school. For the students in Gertrud Hardtmann's research, five existential assumptions were shattered: (1) That evil is restrained to criminals (socially defined), (2) that evil is limited, (3) that state authorities fight crimes, but do not commit crime, (4) that normal humans cannot commit atrocities, and (5) that one's own family is incapable of participating in such atrocities.

In sum, the interviews reveal that, for many, basic trust in the social world was lost after facing the Holocaust. Often teachers were not able to assist their students in the process of coming to terms with the Holocaust. A reliable teacher-student relation was missing. Making a vital connection between the past and the present failed. Also, traditional class teaching cannot accomplish what "key experiences" can precipitate. At the same time, key experiences require relational support. The interviewees preferred to listen to concrete persons rather than attend brutal presentations, which did not allow them to relate to real people, either contemporary Germans or survivors.

Concluding Reflections

Reconnecting to the original question of this chapter: what themes emerge out of these five studies which may help to apprehend the psychosocial situation? Emerging themes will be organized according their relevance to the situation of the first, second and third generations. Differences between the first, second and third generation need to be acknowledged, such as: "We wanted to move on" (first generation), "We are not guilty and we do not want to ask" (second generation), "We feel shame but do not know why" (third generation).

The psychological situation of the first generation was precipitated by contrasts:

- The flood of propaganda during fascism contrasts with the speechlessness and collective silence in post-war Germany.

- Fear and delusion support the use of defense mechanisms such as silence, repression, and transference.

The psychological situation of the second generation was presented as:

- Unsolved conflict material is passed on to the next generation who are living out un-lived emotions of their parents' generation and bearing the burden of the past. Teaching the second generation a way of resistance against parental splitting-off, and passing-on might be already too late.
- Communication patterns can mirror societal taboos, and thus impact identity formation.
- Pondering the particular situation of women, Hauer's communication patterns are challenging second generation women to move beyond subliminal and foggy communication and learn to dare to ask questions.
- When people remember and repeat, they are able to work through their responses to the Holocaust. This also means learning to know one's roots.
- German people need to listen to Jewish voices. This listening includes the willingness to face unfathomable evil (fratricide and incomprehensible crimes), which will shatter one's social trust.

The psychological situation of the (second and) third generation

- Requirements for building up a critical identity include self-acceptance and self-construction, relation to history, integrating history, holding the tension of ambivalence, acknowledging painful emotions, and overcoming a fragmented history.
- Educational concerns have to address memory as a complex approach for teaching, instead of an emphasis on historical facts.
- Heimannsberg's criteria for building up a critical collective identity points to a direction which needs further elaboration in terms of accomplishments in the context of private discourse and challenges of the public discourse.

In sum; the themes above illuminate the situations of the first, second and third generations from various psychological perspectives. Those themes also point to educational challenges for the future. They will receive further attention in chapters 7 and 8. Since this dissertation focuses on implications of the Holocaust for Christian women, the following two chapters will explore specific circumstances regarding gender identity (Chapter 5) and particular challenges posed by one's religious identity (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 5

Women and National Socialism: A Feminist Psychosocial Analysis

The last chapter explored various psychological studies illuminating the dynamics and conditions of the private discourse on Holocaust in Germany. Those studies did not differentiate in regard to gender. Since the trajectory of the dissertation specifically follows women's involvement in the Holocaust heritage, the present chapter will focus on that involvement. The dissertation flows from the very broad societal frame of public discourse (Chapter 3) to the psychological dynamics of private discourse (Chapter 4) to the more specific challenge for women in private discourse. In order to achieve that goal, I will draw from feminist scholars who are engaged in a threefold task: addressing the societal context of behavior, challenging women's involvement on oppression, and attempting to empower women to bring about change. In this chapter, I hope to show how a gender specific perspective can contribute to the empowerment of women as moral agents. My departure-point will be the somewhat "average" woman during the Third Reich, who was a silent accomplice, a bystander and onlooker. I will draw upon the work of feminist scholars from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and religious education to understand more deeply what the obstacles and new challenges are for women of the second and third generations to become empowered in their moral agency.

In a sense, this is the "turning" chapter, where Holocaust studies and women's studies intersect; where women may learn to acknowledge their share of responsibility, expand their own perception of themselves as victims, recognize their own capacity for doing evil, and reclaim their moral agency.

The chapter will begin with a case study of the Stangl family and thereby raise some unsettling questions. The subsequent overview of the development of feminist research on the Holocaust will introduce themes and provide a framework within which

the reader can locate the discussion on women's moral agency which includes perspectives of Carol Gilligan, Christina Thürmer-Rohr and Carol Lakey Hess. The expanded concept of prophetic caring is an integration of those perspectives.

Three Clarifying Definitions

I will first clarify three key terms that underscore my own understanding of women's experience, feminism and patriarchy. I am building on a definition of experience in feminist theological discussion, which emerged out of a critical debate between the empirical concept of experience on the one hand and the concept of divine revelation (e.g. Karl Barth) on the other hand.¹ Women's experience is the departure-point and source of women's liberation movements. "Experience" in this feminist discussion embraces three critical traits: 1) women's experience is valued and considered an authority in itself, functioning as an hermeneutic principle; 2) women's experience fosters a concern for conditions of life, connecting individual life situations and social critique; 3) women's experience challenges society and church to reflect critically on whether the diversity of women's experience has been given full consideration.

Feminism can be defined as interpreting, reflecting and acting in the interest of women. An inclusive definition of feminism requires acknowledgment of the following premise. Feminism explicitly reflects the thinking and acting of women as a diverse group and attempts in particular to include minority voices. I am drawing from the second International and Interdisciplinary Women's Conference in Groningen 1984. Those women identified the following goals for feminism:

¹Britta Jüngst, Auf der Seite des Todes das Leben: Auf dem Weg zu einer christlich-feministischen Theologie nach der Shoah (On the death's side there is life: Towards a Christian-feminist theology after the Shoah), (Gütersloh, Germany: Christian Kaiser, 1996), 25.

(1) Equality, dignity and freedom for women to control their own lives and bodies, both inside and outside the home. . . (2) Abolishing all forms of inequality, control and oppression through establishing a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.²

Patriarchy can be defined as the interpretation of systems of legal, economic, political and social relations that maintain the dominance of male power in those relations. I will use the understanding of patriarchy as described in Christine Schaumberger's article.³ As such, the concept of patriarchy is used in the struggle against the oppression of women. Schaumberger rejects the idea that women's oppression is a "secondary condition" articulated by left-wing radicals. Schaumberger addresses the history of patriarchy and dismantles the rationale that women's subordination is "natural." She insists on a broader view that places patriarchy within a systemic context involving various forms of dominance. Thus patriarchal oppression is far more than a private issue of women. In her view, patriarchy is a societal problem that oppresses both women and men.

Women Bearing Unbearable Truth: A Case Study

Looking at a case study, this section unravels women's hidden involvement in the murderous Third Reich. In her book Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience, journalist Gitta Sereny depicts the incredible dichotomy of the Stangl family, which she uncovered in extensive conversations with Franz Stangl and his wife, Theresa Stangl. While Franz Stangl performed his murderous job in Treblinka and Sobibor, he enjoyed the harmonious and peaceful haven of his marriage and family.⁴ Theresa Stangl is described as

²Jüngst, 51.

³Christine Schaumberger, "Patriarchat" (Patriarchy), in Wörterbuch der Feministischen Theologie (Dictionary of feminist theology), eds. Elisabeth Gössmann, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Herlinde Pissarek-Hudelist, et al., (Gütersloh, Germany: Verlagshaus Mohn, 1991), 321-23.

⁴Conservative calculations indicate that more than 800,000 people were gassed at Treblinka. Another 250,000 victims were murdered at Sobibor. Franz Stangl was

a very devout Catholic. During the war, she accidentally learned about her husband's involvement in the deadly mission at Treblinka. Totally upset, she confronted him. But, "I finally allowed myself to be convinced that his role in this camp was purely administrative - of course I *wanted* to be convinced, didn't I?"⁵ In 1967, Franz Stangl was captured in Brazil and brought to a military prison. Theresa Stangl visited him, recalling: "I asked him about Treblinka; by this time, you know, we had read so much. He was so distraught, all I could think of was to console him. All I wanted then was to be for him someone he could be sure of, someone he could lean on."⁶

At the end of many conversations, Gitta Sereny asked Theresa Stangl:

Would you tell me what you think would have happened if at any time you had faced your husband with an absolute choice; if you had said to him: 'Here it is; I know it's terribly dangerous, but either you get out of this terrible thing, or else the children and I will leave you.' . . . if you had confronted him with these alternatives, which do you think he would have chosen? . . . [Some hours later, Theresa Stangl came back and shared] I have thought very hard, I know what you want to know. I know what I am doing when I answer your question. I am answering it because I think I owe it to you, to others, to myself; I believe that if I had ever confronted Paul [Franz] with the alternatives: Treblinka - or me; he would . . . yes he would in the final analysis have chosen me.⁷

That is one of the most honest and shocking admissions I encountered during my readings. What tragic insight, tragically too late. But Theresa Stangl could not bear the weight of her confession. Later that night, she left a message with Gitta Sereny insisting she wanted to undo her admission. It seems she found it unbearable to face her own truth and her failure as a moral agent.

sentenced to life imprisonment by a West German court on December 22, 1970 because he had served as a commander at both of those Nazi death camps on Polish soil.

⁵Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness* (New York: McGraw-Hill Books, 1974), 278.

⁶*Ibid.*, 356.

⁷*Ibid.*, 361.

In order to develop criteria to analyze this powerful example, I will turn now to a discussion of feminist scholars and their tools for dealing with such unbearable truth. Later, we will return to Therese Stangl's dilemma.

Feminist Research on the Holocaust

This overview of feminist research on the Holocaust will introduce themes emerging at the intersection of Holocaust studies and women studies. These themes will provide an instrumental framework for the subsequent feminist discussion of women's moral agency where Therese Stangl's dilemma can be further explored.

Quite some time had passed after the war before scholars began to research women's involvement in the fascist terror regime. "Is it appropriate to pursue a gender specific interpretation of the Holocaust?" is one of the questions that feminist scholars have faced since 1983. What historical and social conditions allowed such a delay in women studies?

Atina Grossmann in "Ein Blick aus New York" ⁸ observes some differences between German and American feminist scholars in dealing with the history of National Socialism: Many American scholars were Jewish survivors or children of survivors. They were influenced by British and French social historians, opening for women the path into history by teaching the view from the "bottom up" in contrast with their German colleagues who were primarily educated in sociology and political science and who lacked the proper methodological tools for analyzing social history.⁹ The American feminist scholars also felt a moral advantage. They were the American children of the Holocaust victims and, thus, carried their own heavy burden from and memories of the country of the

⁸Atina Grossmann, "Ein Blick aus New York: German Women's History Group" (A view from New York: German women's history group), *Mittelweg* 36 no. 2 (April/May 1997): 17-21.

⁹*Ibid.*, 17.

victimizer. At the same time, they claimed, "We were not stuck in this mud of guilt, anger and confusion, which our German colleagues had to deal with, in particular during the 70s and 80s."¹⁰ Grossmann recognizes, however, that, in both countries, the study of National Socialism is split into German history and the history of Jews in Germany. According to Grossmann, both schools of thought maintain a distance from each other and will not risk a debate.

In the U.S., women's studies and the studies of National Socialism were prompted by the contemporary American context, in particular the debate on reproductive rights, especially the struggle against misuse of sterilization. Young scholars have perceived fascism essentially as having subjugated the body and sexuality of women. The book When Biology Becomes Destiny was a result of that discussion. Even if it was not explicitly stated, the American discourse always knew about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. In 1983, Joan Ringelheim and Esther Katz organized the first Holocaust conference dealing explicitly with women's perspective: "Women Surviving: The Holocaust." About 400 women attended the conference. It was there that the debate began regarding whether it is appropriate at all to pursue a gender specific interpretation of the Holocaust.

The German journal Mittelweg 36 reflects on 20 years of women's studies and National Socialism in Germany.¹¹ After the educational reforms of the 1960s, women established themselves at west German universities. During the 1970s, feminists faced the accusation from conservative male scholars that Hitler seized power because of the women's vote in 1933. Even if this accusation was not validated, it revealed a dilemma for women's studies at that time: Women were considered politically incompetent. This view

¹⁰Ibid., 18.

¹¹This roundtable conversation took place during the international conference on "20 Years of Women's Studies on National Socialism," December 12-14, 1996, in Hamburg, Germany.

was perpetuated and became part of a self-defense ideology : the cliché of an irrational Hitler equated with irrational women. This view excluded real people and did not question the acting of normal women and men, nor did it question the female and male perpetrators, who could have been their own relatives and parents. Women's studies were not able to interrupt the use of this defense ideology.

Today, women's studies acknowledge women as acting subjects. Drawing from the roundtable conversation "Unterschiedlich weit entfernt von den Zentren der Macht," I will summarize a few decisive insights.¹² Gaby Zipfel opened that conversation with her question, "What do we know with our knowledge?"¹³ Women had initially started to research National Socialism because they wanted to know what women's visions were destroyed through National Socialism. Neglecting women in the whole debate on National Socialism was a given after 1945, and women scholars accepted this as a given. As feminist researchers investigated women's daily lives, they discovered discrepancies in regard to their involvement in the atrocities of the Third Reich. Finally, the perception of women as figures of innocence, not touched by politics, could no longer be maintained.¹⁴ Lerke Gravenhorst concluded: "The situation of innocence is also that of non-acting, that of being without history."¹⁵ This statement and its implied discovery of the early women's studies in National Socialism points to three shifts in women's studies: first, giving up the myth of women's innocence in regard to National Socialism and its atrocities; secondly,

¹²Ibid., 5.

¹³Gudrun Schwarz et al., "Unterschiedlich weit entfernt von den Zentren der Macht" (Diverse distances to the centre of power), Ein Gespräch bei der internationalen Tagung '20 Jahre Frauenforschung zum Nationalsozialismus' am Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (A conversation during the international conference on '20 Years of Women Studies on National Socialism' at the Hamburg institute for social research, *Mittelweg* 36, no. 2 (April/May 1997): 5-16.

¹⁴Ibid., 6.

¹⁵Ibid., (*Der Zustand der Unschuld ist auch einer des Nichthandelns, der Geschichtslosigkeit*), 6.

rethinking women's ability for agency; and, thirdly, acknowledging the connection between a particular conceptualization of women and their (lack of) relating to history.

In 1988, for the first time, feminist scholars held a conference in Berlin on "Women as victims of National Socialist racism." This conference revealed that there were not any German scholars available who had done research on Jewish women. Simultaneous with that humiliating revelation, young German women from the audience demanded to move on and go beyond a discourse on woman as victim. According to their perspective, that had happened long enough. Now it was time to discuss female perpetrators. Christina Thürmer-Rohr was one of the bold feminist voices who pointed to the misconception of victim/sacrifice in the women's movement. (I will return to that later.)

Gudrun Schwarz recalls the historical situation of 1945 and the following years, when German women were washed clean of blame, not only by German men but also by men of the occupying forces. At the Nürnberg trials, the American prosecutor said that he did not want to prosecute women; therefore, women dropped out of the history of persecution. Gudrun Schwarz understands this historical fact as contributing to the current difficulty of including women as perpetrators.¹⁶ Gisela Bock, with her essay "Completely Average Women" summarizes her findings in saying that women willingly made their hands dirty when they were allowed to get involved. Acknowledging the power differential between men and women in the fascist society, women were not involved everywhere, and they did not have the same opportunities.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., 10.

¹⁷Gisela Bock, "Ganz normale Frauen: Täter, Opfer, Mitläufer und Zuschauer im Nationalsozialismus" (Completely average women: Perpetrator, victim, fellow traveler, and bystander in National Socialism), in Zwischen Karriere und Verfolgung: Handlungsräume von Frauen im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland (Between career and persecution: Women's space of action in National Socialist Germany), eds. Kirsten Heinsohn, Barbara Vogel, and Ulrike Weckel (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997), 248-81.

Carola Sachse suggests the concept of couple/pair as a way to explain the inner dynamic of cooperation between man and woman in a patriarchal society: research studies on SS wives and on *Wehrmachtshelferinnen* (female military assistants) illustrate how women had subversive power opportunities which they executed by supporting the male dominated system of that society. Both research studies indicate that the concept of pair/couple was not limited to married couples, but occurred at the front and also in concentration-camps.¹⁸

This review presented historical findings of feminist scholars and raised themes such as: the influence of training and national background on scholars' research, the historical bias regarding women's political incompetence, the exclusion of real women from being researched, the process of dismantling assumptions of innocence, and the connection between the conceptualization of women and the way they fail to relate to the Holocaust. In light of these themes further questions can be addressed. How can these findings be related to a conceptualization of women's moral agency? How can these insights contribute to women's process of learning to relate to the Holocaust heritage?

Women's Ethics of Caring

The recent review on findings in (mostly) feminist historical research on women's involvement in the Holocaust prompts ethical questions. How was it possible that women, raised to care for others, also became involved, held positions, and exercised behavior that contributed to the annihilation of millions of people? How do these studies relate to ethical standards for women ? What kind of connection can be identified between women's involvement and their lack of moral agency?

As mentioned earlier, the discussion of the term *Opfer* (victim and sacrifice) played a major role in the women's movement in general, and in women's studies on National

¹⁸Schwarz et al., 14.

Socialism in particular. Linguistically, the German connotation of *Opfer* is much broader than the American equivalent "victim". In the context of national socialist ideology, the meaning of *Opfer* as sacrifice was emphasized again and again: Women sacrificed their sons and husbands, and thus followed the demands of *Führer* (leader, stands for Hitler) and *Volk* (nation, actually the Aryan community). Then, the women's movement and the feminist critique of society during the 1970s unearthed the self-understanding of women as oppressed people, excluded by patriarchy; thus, women were spoken of as victims. Thinking about women as victims in the context of post-Holocaust Germany presents a serious obstacle to addressing women's complicity. Do women exercise moral agency in a different way than men do? For an answer, we have to turn to feminist research on women's moral development.

In the Western hemisphere, early developmentalists focused their attention almost exclusively on the development of boys. They designed their research and developed their theories to correspond with their studies of boys. Results of these studies were used to conclude that an individual with mature moral agency is one who reflects a high level of autonomy and independence.¹⁹ As she listened to girls and women, Carol Gilligan discovered differences in their moral development and identified key characteristics such as responsibility and care, in contrast to the key male characteristics focused on universal rights and justice.²⁰ Gilligan had done research among women and observed in her research sample that in order to mature, women usually proceed from an orientation of

¹⁹Erik Erikson and Laurence Kohlberg are prime examples for this tendency. Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers, with a Historical Introduction by David Rapaport (New York: International Universities Press, 1959); Laurence Kohlberg, The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

²⁰Carol Gilligan, "Concepts of Self and Morality," in: In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 73.

survival (where the needs of the self are predominant) to a kind of conventional goodness shaped by cultural images of femininity (where caring for others conventionally means self-sacrifice) to a concern for truth (which recognizes the necessity to balance the needs of the self with the needs of others in relationship). According to Gilligan's research and her subsequent framework, she considers the self in relationship to others as central to moral development.²¹ Gilligan's colleague Lawrence Kohlberg had developed a model of moral agency that equated moral development with a growing concern for universal rights and justice (qualities that ranked high with boys), rather than an increasing concern with "care" and "responsibility" (which ranked much higher with girls).

Gilligan's great contribution consisted in addressing and researching gender differences, thus bringing them onto the stage as "another voice." Since the late 1970s, more and more feminists are raising the issues regarding the development of interdependence, intimacy, and nurturance, and the significance of these qualities for moral agency. Taking into account the context of moral choices, general rules do not always apply and the concept of moral behavior needs to be expanded. Subsequent discussions on women's moral development, however, have evoked criticism of Gilligan's findings, such as questioning women's "natural" inclination to care and responsibility. Gilligan has extended her study of gender-related differences to the field of identity formation and issues surrounding the development of adolescent girls coming from very diverse backgrounds.²² She also acknowledges, "Moral maturity then entails an ability to see in at least two ways .

²¹Ibid., 64-105.

²²Carol Gilligan, "Women's Psychological Development: Implications for Psychotherapy," in Women, Girls and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance, eds. Carol Gilligan, Annie G. Rogers, and Deborah L. Tolman (New York: Haworth Press, 1991), 5-32; Carol Gilligan, "Remapping the Moral Domain: New Images of Self in Relationship," in Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education, eds. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, Jill McLean Taylor, and Betty Bardige (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3-20.

... and the relationship between justice and care perspectives or voices becomes a key question for investigation."²³ According to Gilligan, woman's self is rooted in a sense of connection and relatedness to others, whereas Kohlberg's classical categories defined the self in terms of separation and autonomy and thus more capable of deciding according to universal rights.²⁴

Returning to the case study, is Theresa Stangl an example of a woman exercising an ethics of care? Acknowledging that Kohlberg and Gilligan did their studies several decades later and on a different continent, nevertheless I will utilize Gilligan's finding and relate it to the introductory case. Assuming that Theresa Stangl had been socialized in one way or another to care for others, she clearly displays signs of wholehearted care and concern for her husband and her nuclear family. When she learns about his involvement in the concentration-camp Treblinka, she first confronted him with a direct inquiry, but later suppressed and repressed this sharp and painful information. "I finally allowed myself to be convinced that his role in this camp was purely administrative - of course I wanted to be convinced, didn't I?"²⁵ Due to the lack of thorough research on women's moral values during the Third Reich, I will continue to utilize Gilligan's insights regarding that time. According to Gilligan's conceptualization, Theresa Stangl's self was rooted in a sense of connection and relatedness to others. More precisely it was rooted in a very limited sense of others, a sense that excluded those who were ostracized, incarcerated and gassed on a daily basis. She employed a very privatized notion of care commonly taught to women.

The ethics of care as it was applied to the context of National Socialism and the Holocaust, prompts two tasks: the understanding of "others" must be looked at more

²³Carol Gilligan, "Adolescent Development Reconsidered," in Mapping the Moral Domain, xx.

²⁴Lawrence Kohlberg, Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 582.

²⁵Sereny, 278.

closely and, even more critically, the reality of women's complicity must be faced. These two tasks will be addressed by reflections on women's complicity inspired by Christina Thürmer-Rohr, and reflections on a radical understanding of the "other" inspired by Zygmunt Bauman in Chapter 7.

Women's Complicity

Christina Thürmer-Rohr, professor of sociology at the Technical University Berlin, worked extensively on a critical understanding of women as victims. Building on that, she coined the term *Mittäterschaft* (complicity) regarding women's involvement in patriarchal structures. In her essay "Mittäterschaft der Frau - Analyse zwischen Mitgefühl und Kälte" (Complicity of woman: analysis in between empathy and coldness), Thürmer-Rohr states that "Mistrust against men's society includes mistrust against women in men's society."²⁶ Her particular concept of *Mittäterschaft* unfolds this kind of mistrust for which she is advocating. According to her analysis, women simultaneously benefit and suffer from participating in men's society. Women's cooperation is necessary to maintain that system. Women's inclination to be supportive of others and not to intervene in men's activities is well trained by the social system. The discontent women feel may well indicate a repressed awareness that the place and function they fulfill and the successful way in which they support men's activities, has deeply damaged them. There is also the suspicion that, collectively, women are not aware of their unspoken function, and that this lack of knowledge is deliberately programmed into their social development.²⁷ Therefore, Thürmer-Rohr's thesis of *Mittäterschaft* rebels against women's conformity and functionality. Her observation is that this patriarchal world would not exist "without women's collaboration in actively and passively paying tribute to men . . . neither would

²⁶Thürmer-Rohr, *Vagabundinnen*, 87.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 88.

women be the way they now are."²⁸ For Thürmer-Rohr, collaboration in this context means that women's time, energy, and abilities are dedicated to empowering men.

Thürmer-Rohr exposes the assumption that lies behind her thesis on women's collaboration, namely that women are not clean and harmless and cannot escape as many would like to see them. She says that this fact "stains women with reality."²⁹ She understands *Mittäterschaft* as an analytical tool and category to shed light on those mechanisms which shape women according to the wishes of men's society. Her concept demands that women take responsibility in a new way: they are challenged to take responsibility for the conditions under which they function. Historically, women are accustomed to responsibility, in particular the raising of each new generation. Thürmer-Rohr calls for re-examination of the object of responsibility: "the responsibility, which is implied in the term *Mittäterschaft*, is one which intends to employ and honor women's expertise in responsibility but also to critique and to transcend."³⁰ The term *Mittäterschaft* has two dimensions, one pointing to a societal process and the other to a personal situation. She calls it a societal-analytical aspect and subjective-moral aspect. The analytical term addresses the complicity of women in the whole historical development of men's culture. Generally speaking, women participate as co-actors in men's power and violent activities. The subjective term addresses the specific embeddedness of the individual woman in her daily activities, "which makes her again and again waiting to assume patriarchal assignments."³¹ During the discussion on women's complicity that has occurred during recent years, women have carefully analyzed this second meaning related to their personal situations. They have understood it primarily as an attack on their

²⁸Ibid., 88.

²⁹Ibid., 89.

³⁰Ibid., 93.

³¹Ibid., 93.

individual being, however. Quite often the analytical dimension and the social context have been neglected. On the one hand, this emphasis on personal situations reveals the quality, courage, and seriousness of women's willingness to explore their own complicity. On the other hand, this limited personal approach can lead to further harm. Thürmer-Rohr acknowledges the value of that specific "female" approach as the capacity to become deeply confused, which is, in general, the precondition for reversing and healing one's emptiness.³²

Thürmer-Rohr is convinced that women's ways of thinking need to be dismantled. If *Mittäterschaft* means that women are not only excluded from the men's world, but are also included and restrained by it, then we have to reflect on both simultaneous conditions: being excluded and being included. What does that mean? How is that possible? Can woman exist in two places? Is woman split? Does she have two souls - one which belongs and another which is alien and strange? What specific function comes into play to allow this "as-well-as"? Can it be concluded that women are competent in knowing both the inside and outside, in possessing in-sight and over-sight?

At this point, Thürmer-Rohr applies her concept of *Mittäterschaft* as a methodological category, using it as a way to ask specific questions. Despite women's perspective from both inside and outside, their insights are distorted because their perspectives are limited and restrained by their complicity. Discovering one's own complicity and that of others is already an experience of de-solidarity, of the de-joining of women. Thürmer-Rohr understands the current situation of women as a double existence: A woman, who knows the inside, but is not satisfied with it; and a woman who knows the outside knows that she is homeless but does not long to return. She understands this as the departure-point for a new kind of freedom which women can now explore.

³²*Ibid.*, 95.

In her essay "Grenzüberschreitungen. Gedanken zur Patriarchatskritik,"³³

Thürmer-Rohr addresses new challenges for German west-east feminism, namely to deal with democracy in terms of representing not only one's own ideas, but also the interests of those who do not have a voice, those who are marginalized.³⁴ Alluding to her earlier work, she demands that feminism must rid itself of its cherished perception of the white victim woman in western culture and give up the self-protecting definition of being powerless and incapable of acting.³⁵

Thürmer-Rohr's critique is quite harsh, and she dismantles women's tendency to look inward at "the prescribed disease," in particular among middle class women. The unhealthy consequence of this inward search is to silence themselves and disappear.³⁶ When she first introduced the term "accomplicity," many feminists understood her as if women were again to be blamed. The initial rejection of the idea of "complicity" can be understood from the history of the women's movement. It had taken much time and energy for women to reject the idea that they were responsible for the violation of their own rights.

Our communal rejection of guilt justified the demand for autonomy as a political consequence. In the process, the linking of autonomy with the victim theory became a trap. We cannot base our autonomy on our victim status.³⁷

Thürmer-Rohr pushes women further and rejects a victim status. According to her, claiming one's victim position was once important to clarify the power differential. But in order to move beyond procrastination, and to become moral agents, I agree with Thürmer-

³³Thürmer-Rohr, "Grenzüberschreitungen. Gedanken zur Patriarchatskritik" (Exceeding borders: Reflections on a critique of patriarchy), Romero-Haus-Protokolle (1992): 1-15.

³⁴Ibid., 13.

³⁵Ibid., 14.

³⁶Thürmer-Rohr, Vagabonding, 60.

³⁷Ibid., 46.

Rohr that women cannot hold on to victim identity. Regarding women's ongoing victimization in patriarchy, I depart from Thürmer-Rohr in terms of acknowledging that women seriously need to attend to their traumas to reach some degree of healing. Sometimes both processes can occur simultaneously, sometimes healing and attending to the victim heritage requires priority before taking responsibility for the perpetrator heritage.

Why is it so important to take the road from deception to un-deception? Thürmer-Rohr asserts that we have to renounce all illusions.

The strength produced by illusions is a miserable crutch; it leads to despair and self-contempt. Our only way out of deception into un-deception: to have the courage to look things in the face and not be on the lookout for perspectives where there are none. We must radically reject every superficial consolation.³⁸

She insists that women are mistaken if they think they are able to take their different morality out of the closet, and and replace and occupy empty spaces. She is convinced that this would be an "a-historical illusion." Her rationale:

The moral bankruptcy of Western man undermines this supposedly very different female morality...it is dependent, amalgamated. It has developed during this same polluted history as a morality of service to man, as a morality of relationship, whose assumptions stand and fall with the acceptance of the disparity between the sexes.³⁹

Thürmer-Rohr's rationale unravels that women's supposedly different ethical values are shaped by the historical context of patriarchy and thus are contaminated as men's ethical values are.

Gilligan's research had attempted to identify another voice in moral development, making the claim that women's morality would walk a different road. In my view, Thürmer-Rohr's analysis challenges the interpretation of Gilligan's research findings.

³⁸Ibid., 62.

³⁹Ibid., 104.

Thürmer-Rohr does not thwart Gilligan's observations, but rather the interpretation regarding their authentic and genuine value for women's own and self-determined goals. In talking about distorted insights, Thürmer-Rohr questions the outcome and contribution of women's different moral voice. Thürmer-Rohr unravels the deep ambivalence inherent in women's ethics of caring.

Prophetic Caring

This section will expand the ethics of caring to a "prophetic caring" by building on Gilligan's concept and Thürmer-Rohr's concept of women's complicity. Two issues specifically will be addressed namely women's temptation to sacrifice themselves, and women's temptation to limit their caring and define "the other" in a narrow and exclusive sense. Therefore, attending to one's own self and expanding boundaries are two characteristics of "prophetic caring."

Attending to One's Own Self

Does Thürmer-Rohr's harsh critique suggest that we totally dismiss Gilligan's concept of caring? Is the "ethics of caring" to be understood as just a superficial consolation? Carol Lakey Hess defends Gilligan and points to Gilligan's carefully chosen path between her recovery of women's moral focus on caring and her critique of a distorted way of caring. Lakey Hess says, "Rather than a celebration of traditional femininity, Gilligan offers a trenchant critique of the cultural identification of caring with women's self-sacrifice."⁴⁰ At this point, Gilligan and Thürmer-Rohr find some agreement on the need to expel women's willingness to sacrifice their own judgment, as commanded by a patriarchal society. Theresa Stangl's very first response to her husband's involvement in Treblinka was rejection. She had an intuition and a moral judgment that her husband's

⁴⁰Carol Lakey Hess, Caretakers of Our Common House: Women's Development in Communities of Faith (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 117.

mission at Treblinka was totally wrong. Later, she denied her own inner voice, silenced her intuition and eventually sacrificed her own judgment.

What detrimental dynamic is going on when women sacrifice their own judgment and allow themselves to be utilized in a murderous mission, as happened in the case of the Stangl family? What kind of lesson do women need to learn in order to resist a culture that demands total self sacrifice from them?

The need for women is to birth a new self, less dominated by others' expectations. Virginia Woolf talks about having to kill the "Angel of the House" in order to give birth to a new self:

It was she who used to come between me and my paper when I was writing reviews. It was she who bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her. You who come from a younger and happier generation may not have heard of her -- you may not know what I mean by the Angel of the House. I will describe her as shortly as I can. She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draft, she sat in it -- in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. . . I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her. My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defense. Had I not killed her she would have killed me.⁴¹

Virginia Woolf poignantly uses this metaphor of killing the Angel of the House as a way of killing the old subjugated self. The angel can be interpreted as a symbol of perfect caring. The strong decision to kill the angel expresses an attitude of total determination. The decision is a decision of life and death; Woolf had to kill the angel in order to protect herself and avoid being killed herself. In order to attend to her own new self, she had to get rid of the false caring self. Attending to one's own true self becomes decisive when

⁴¹ Virginia Woolf, "Professions for Women," in The Death of the Mother and Other Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1942), 236.

women need to take a stance against cultural norms they are surrounded by and taught them to neglect their own judgment.

Expanding Boundaries

What are the boundaries of caring? This is a fundamental question in the context of the Holocaust. In a late interview with the journalist Sereny, Theresa Stangl argued that she supported her husband because he needed someone to lean on.⁴² Theresa Stangl seemed to be influenced by an ethics of caring, but she focused exclusively on her nuclear family. She was trapped by deadly boundaries.

In her book Caretakers of Our Common House, Lakey Hess builds on Gilligan and expands her theory into a three-dimensional concept of caring: conversational caring, empathetic caring, and prophetic caring. I will focus on prophetic caring, since this aspect embraces a dimension usually neglected by reflections on caring; in the context of Holocaust studies and women studies, it is quite important. For Lakey Hess, prophetic caring involves the courage to confront and challenge others precisely because one cares about them.⁴³ In my view, Lakey Hess goes beyond Gilligan. Lakey Hess's suggestion alludes to that kind of boldness contained in the Jewish idea of *chutzpah*.⁴⁴ Applying this concept to the Stangl case and to the general attitude of many *Aryan* women during the Third Reich, "prophetic caring" would have made a big difference. I do not assume that this would have stopped the vicious circle of evil inherent in the National Socialist ideology, but at least a considerable number of women would have been challenged to give up their bystander role. In Theresa Stangl's situation, she would have been able to confront her husband in a crucial way by attending not only to her own *Aryan* family, but also to those who were excluded from this community. Theresa Stangl, at least, would have had

⁴²Gitta Sereny, Into that Darkness (New York: McGraw-Hill Books, 1974), 278.

⁴³Lakey Hess, 117.

⁴⁴Darrell Fasching elaborates on *chutzpah* in Narrative Theology after Auschwitz.

to confront her husband with her own opposing and more inclusive attitude toward the suffering inmates in the death-camps Treblinka and Sobibor.

The gospel of Mark depicts a woman who exercised prophetic caring: the anointing woman. Feminist theological reflections on Mark 14:3-9 can illuminate further how "prophetic caring" can be interpreted. I am drawing from Monika Renninger's contribution "Sie hat getan, was sie konnte!" (She did what she could do).⁴⁵ We do not know the name of that woman who anointed Jesus. The gesture of anointing embraces two meanings; one meaning represents the tradition of tender caring for countless sick and dying people, but another meaning represents the tradition of the prophets of Israel, who signified with a symbolic gesture what God intends to do with a chosen person (1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 16: 3; etc). Jesus affirms and even defends her action by predicting "Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." (Mark 14: 9). This line became the leading image for much feminist work, beginning with Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's book In Memory of Her.⁴⁶ With her courageous gesture of anointing, the unknown woman embraced both traditions, the caring one and the prophetic one.

Lahey Hess and Mark's account on the anointing woman suggest an understanding of prophetic caring that integrates women's boldness and courage into caring concerns, which are often lacking in traditional caring values. Both perspectives address the audacity to confront traditional expectations and the courage to cross gender boundaries.

⁴⁵Monika Renninger, "Sie hat getan, was sie konnte!"(She did what she could do) Junge Kirche 60, no. 2 (Feb.1999): 95-98.

⁴⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

Concluding Interpretations

The concluding part of Chapter 5 will pay attention to seven challenges unearthed in the feminist psychosocial analysis of "Women and National Socialism" in the preceding pages. These challenges are drawn from: (1) critical self-reflections of feminist historians, (2) Thürmer-Rohr's critical reflections on women's complicity, (3) women's search for a coherent identity in light of patriarchal distortions, (4) women's alienation from NS victims' perspectives, (5) considerations of the impact of social context, (6) reflections on women's victim roles, and (7) the ambivalence of women's roles.

(1) Asking: "What we do with our knowledge": This critical self-reflection was one of the questions asked after 20 years of women studies and National Socialism. Historians had identified areas of women's involvement in the fascist terror, and the various roles they had played. But what does that mean in regard to moral reflections? What do we do with our knowledge? In light of the impasse in public discourse (Chapter 3), women's complicity in the Third Reich and their ambivalent ethics of caring in the past, we now relate this acquired historical knowledge to critical reflections on women's moral self-understanding. Feminist research should expand and integrate educational reflections on the reconstruction of women's identity in light of women's involvement in the Holocaust.

(2) Facing women's complicity: *Mittäterschaft* in Christina Thürmer-Rohr's analysis seems to be a revolutionary term; it rebels against conformity and functionality. Furthermore, acknowledging *Mittäterschaft* touches on a two-fold interpretation of "responsibility," namely employing and honoring women's expertise (for instance in education), but also critiquing and transcending it. Acknowledging one's complicity in maintaining an oppressive system may be a qualitative new step toward self-acceptance and the first step toward a new self-reconstruction. Barbara Heimannsberg had used those

two concepts in order to describe "true identity," understood as a critical ownership of one's history.⁴⁷

(3) Reshaping women's identity: Thürmer-Rohr rejects the concept of identity as a *fixe idee*. She rather favors the metaphor of vagabonding, since she acknowledges that women are homeless in a history of patriarchy. Given that I accede to a great degree with her social analysis, I depart from her interpretation of women's identity as "vagabonding." I have not yet given up the search for an integrated identity as a moving, flexible entity. Vagabonding and the idea of a moving, flexible entity both reject determined and static descriptions of identity. Whereas vagabonding emphasizes a continuous travelling and being *en route* as an individual, my vision prefers a communal journey, including engagement and not detachment from the social contexts through which one passes. The question emerges: what conceptualization of the self might be most useful in addressing the challenges of an ambiguous and multiple identity? This task lies beyond the scope of this dissertation but should be pursued at a later time.

(4) Seeking to know victims: The 1988 conference in Berlin revealed a lack of feminist research in Germany on the fate of victims. The discovery of this void was not accidental. A comparison of Holocaust studies in the USA with those in Germany indicates differences in their respective emphases. Field Study I sheds light on 33 church-affiliated women: Fifteen of them never met a survivor of the National Socialism, and additional eight women recall encounters during a visit to Israel. Only two women mention Jewish people whom they befriended. The voice of victims is not easy to hear in Germany. Chapters 7 and 8 will pay particular attention to this serious concern.

(5) Analyzing the social context: Christina Thürmer-Rohr observed the temptation to neglect the analytical dimension and social context of *Mittäterschaft*. In order to resist that

⁴⁷Chapter 3, 17.

temptation, the beginning of the dissertation (Chapter 3) deals explicitly with public discourse as one way to attend to the broader societal frame. Two additional places in this dissertation correspond to that concern: namely, the review of the historical development of feminist scholarship (Chapter 5) as well as the historical journey of the association of German psychotherapists in Chapter 4. Both delineations may be understood as conveying the social context in which research was done.

(6) Moving beyond victimization: Women's experiences of being marginalized in a patriarchal society can illustrate the dynamic of victims. For instance, insights from research on rape and abuse victims indicates that there is a liberating energy involved in acknowledging oneself as victim. In particular, people come to see the power differential between perpetrator and victim and its impact on being victimized. At this point, I am not yet clear whether this experience has the potential to open up a deeper understanding of victims of the Holocaust. In terms of moving out of one's victim's role, like Thürmer-Rohr is demanding, there is liberating energy in acknowledging one's involvement in perpetrator patterns in history, in structural complexities, and ideological beliefs such as racism. When women dare to face and embrace evil, they can leave the victims' role and become stained⁴⁸ (*befleckt*) by another reality; they move from innocence to experience.

(7) Facing the ambivalence in women's roles: The phenomenon of "ambivalence" is expanded by Thürmer-Rohr's critical analysis regarding women's role in a patriarchal society. Women embrace two conditions simultaneously, namely being excluded and included in men's world, knowing the inside and outside perspective. Does that mean she

⁴⁸The German expression *unbefleckt* has two meanings: (1.) without stains, clean, not dirty; (2.) virgin, not having had intercourse. I am not sure whether Christina Thürmer-Rohr is playing on that. Anyway, with her call that women get stained with reality, I understand her saying that women have to lose their virginity in order to be "fruitful." In terms of the second meaning, they need to be exposed to the "dirty" reality, in order to become more whole and mature -- to expand life.

owns "in-sight" and "over-sight"? Thürmer-Rohr calls for staining women with reality. Courage is necessary in order to dare to look at things in the face. This courage to face ambivalence in one's own life might be a necessary precondition to getting rid of self-deception. Kathleen Greider ponders the challenges of ambiguity and relationality in her book Reckoning with Aggression.⁴⁹ The fundamental reality of our current world is "in its essence, complexly ambiguous and relational."⁵⁰ Greider understands ambiguity as referring to the "both/and" quality of life, to a situation where multiple meanings characterize life. The awareness of living in an ambiguous world seems to be related to the awareness of living in a pluralistic world. As Greider acknowledges, "increased openness to the ambiguity and relationality of cultural multiplicity depends upon psychospiritual strategies no less than upon social strategies."⁵¹ This issue requires specific attention, in particular in regard to the serious work German women need to do. From where can they derive "psychospiritual strategies" to face their ambivalent heritage? In the next chapter I will explore that question further.

Returning to the introductory example of Therese Stangl, this chapter provided feminist tools to analyze the dilemma of bearing an unbearable truth in regard to women's moral development. Both in theory and in practice, women's moral development urgently needs an expansion towards prophetic caring. Prophetic caring embraces careful attending to one's own self and rejecting expectations for sacrifices. Prophetic caring means also the audacity to care for those who are easily excluded. A new responsibility is added to that: not only being responsible for those one is caring for, but also for the circumstances and conditions under which one is caring for others.

⁴⁹Kathleen Greider, Reckoning with Aggression: Theology, Violence, and Vitality (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 17-19.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 17.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 19.

CHAPTER 6

Christians Are Facing the Abyss

In this chapter the ambiguous relationship between the *Shoah* and Christian identity will be explored. The quality of ambiguity refers to Christianity's involvement in events which precipitated the Holocaust, along with the resources in Christianity for critique, hope, and transformed identity. My search has been for a spirituality which comes out of the Christian tradition and which might assist German Christian women to face the abyss and not perish.

The first part outlines the dilemma which Christians experience when they face the abyss. The second part identifies clues for a spirituality which responds to such a dilemma. To attain these goals, I will listen to women from Field Study I as they responded to the question regarding the necessity for Christians to deal with the Holocaust.¹ Several themes emerged from their responses and will structure the first part of the chapter. The rationale for putting strong emphasis on the interviewees' identified issues is that this work is geared toward developing new religious educational practices precisely for church-affiliated women of the second and third generation. For this reason I am drawing upon the experience and insights of the interviewees regarding the dilemma for Christians in facing the Holocaust; this is a departure-point that takes the current awareness of Christian women seriously. Their topics will be then expanded by analyzing historical perspectives and the anti-Judaism debate among German feminist theologians, especially the issue of "how to address guilt?"

¹See Appendix A, question 6.

In the second part of the chapter, the search for a post-*Shoah* spirituality focuses on four metaphors of human life: looking through windows of vulnerability, responding to the bent-over woman, wrestling as a rite of passage, and traveling on one's journey.

The Dilemma

Christians face major dilemmas with the Holocaust, for the *Shoah* implicates the Christian community and its theology and practices. The respondents in Field Study I identified four particular themes of the dilemma. They emphasized the importance of: (1) acknowledging Christian complicity in precipitating the *Shoah*, (2) critical reflection on Christian beliefs, (3) re-thinking Christian-Jewish relations, and (4) facing obligations for the future. Each theme will be introduced by statements from Field Study I. The last theme, "obligations for the future," will exceed the explicit concerns of the Field Study I responses and will include consideration of feminist theological concerns.

Acknowledging Christian Complicity in Precipitating the *Shoah*

Three central statements from Field Study I shed light on how women of the second- and third-generation perceive Christian involvement in the Holocaust. Alluding to the long history of hatred, one woman wrote, "During the course of history we Christians sowed hate and contempt toward Jewish people through the church" Addressing Christians' participation in the treatment of Jews, another woman wrote "Christians participated in the persecution of Jews" A third woman questioned the failure of the church and asked "Why didn't the church oppose in a stronger way those atrocities . . . ?" These quotes address the long history of hatred, the direct and concrete involvement of Christians in the Holocaust, and the failure of the church to oppose effectively such atrocities. These concerns need further consideration.

Long History of Hatred

The Gospel of John portrays Jesus with a statement which could be interpreted in an anti-Judaic way. (John 8: 43-44). During the first three hundred years, the Early Church Fathers wrote theological reflections with anti-Judaic tendencies. For example, Justin Martyr (100-165) spoke of the Jews as the ones who killed Christ.² Origen (185-254) was convinced that the Jews "had committed a crime against the savior of the human race."³ In 313 the 'Edict of Tolerance' allowed, for the first time, the Christian religion to exist legally in the Roman Empire. This fourth century event was decisive in terms of transforming Christianity into the only legal religion of the Roman Empire. This power shift allowed the institutionalizing of anti-Judaism, not only in church teaching, but also in more secular fields. When the legal status of the Jewish community crumbled, the prejudices and violence towards Jews increased. Hitler had this as a reference when he expressed his vision of just finishing what the Christian tradition had already set in motion. "I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord . . . I set the Aryan and the Jew over and against each other."⁴

Since most women of Field Study I and II were affiliated with the Lutheran church, Luther's involvement in supporting anti-Judaism will receive particular attention in the following paragraphs. The anti-Judaistic dimension of the Lutheran tradition seems not to

²St. Justin was the first to voice that "tribulations were justly imposed upon you [the Jews], for you have murdered the Just One." In Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1962) chap. 16, 172.

³Origen stated that "they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race." In Origen, *Against Celsus*, Ante-Nicene Christian Literature (New York: Scribner, 1886-1905), 4: 506.

⁴Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, n.pag. as quoted in Darrell J. Fasching, *Narrative Theology after Auschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 20.

be well-known to the interviewees, despite its influence in German Protestant history. Only one woman of the 33 interviewees in Field Study I mentioned it. Prospective teaching guidelines will have to take this into account.

According to Heiko Oberman, the Jewish question does not just occupy an ugly corner in Luther's whole work, but occupies a central place in his theological reflection over the course of his life.⁵ Luther perceived Jews as the living embodiment of a legalistic religion that seemed to threaten his new reformation discourses. The young Luther, with his treatise of 1523, "Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew," did not upgrade Jews; rather Luther indicts Christians by saying that "the wrath of God applies to all, Jews and Christians alike, all those who oppose his Word."⁶

Twenty years later, in 1543, Luther expressed a hostile harshness in his treatise, "On the Jews and their Lies." Assuming that history was at its close, Luther interpreted Jews as expressing the condition of the church, which he felt was under fire and attacked by evil forces.⁷ Five specific writings deal with the Jews and, thus, reveal that "the Jewish question is lodged in the bedrock of Luther's theology."⁸ Luther used the Jews as an example to expose to all Christians that they have the disposition for collaborating with the embodiment of evil. Instead of integrating such a humbling awareness about their own disposition, the Christian community did the opposite and eliminated it, thus leading to a detrimental perception of the Jewish community. Oberman concludes, "Only through a suppression of this theological foundation could the anti-Judaism inherent in Luther - and in the Christian faith as a whole - become the plaything of modern anti-Semitism."⁹

⁵Heiko Oberman, The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation, trans. James L. Porter (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

⁶Ibid., 107.

⁷Ibid., 104.

⁸Ibid., 108.

⁹Ibid., 124.

In summary, church history reveals that the church has avoided facing its own shadow. Anti-Semitism, more precisely anti-Judaism, is something that can be unearthed as the excluded shadow in Christianity for almost twenty centuries.

Christians' Participation in the Persecution of Jews

One woman from Field Study I named Christians' participation in the persecution of Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. The heading plays on her words. This section will consider Martin Niemöller, acknowledged as a victim of the Third Reich although he was still aware about his own involvement in the fate of the Jewish population during those years. He will be heeded precisely because he reflects on his Christian beliefs; many more formally recognized Christians were, in one way or another, involved in the deadly mission of deportation, but were unable to see how Christian anti-Judaism and Christians' actions in the persecution of Jewish people could be connected.

Martin Niemöller, a leading pastor of the Confessing Church who had been incarcerated during the Third Reich from 1938 to 1945, made a personal guilt confession in March 1946 during a sermon in Wuppertal-Barmen to his fellow Christians. He acknowledged explicitly that six million Jews were murdered by German hands. This awareness had dawned on him in fall 1945, when he read the sign at the crematoria in Dachau "From 1933 to 1945, here 238,756 people were burned." In this moment, Niemöller felt deeply that this was his guilt. He then shared his journey during those early years about how he did not speak up, when the Nazis first incarcerated the communists in 1933. At that point he lacked his eventual insight that, "in each communist, my Lord and savior Jesus Christ was incarcerated and imprisoned."¹⁰ In 1938, when Niemöller himself was transported from one prison to the next, he observed thousands of Jews being deported. He was scared, but he did not make the connection that this was also his Lord

¹⁰Martin Niemöller, "Dokumentation. Ein persönliches Schuldbekenntnis" (Documentation. A personal guilt confession), *Theologische Beiträge* 17 (1986): 269.

who was deported. "I kept silent because I feared for my little life . . ." ¹¹ He reflects upon the question of what should we have done? In 1933, there were about 14,000 Protestant ministers working in the church. Referring to the passage in Matthew 25:45, he points out that if those 14,000 pastors would have resisted, and even if they had been killed, then WWII would not have occurred. ¹² Niemöller juxtaposes his deep awareness of his damnation by the gospel as rescuing him from that damnation.

Presented in a sermon, Niemöller's language is a very religious language, and his ethical standards are taken from the gospel of Matthew and the "great judgment." He understands his guilt as having failed already in 1933 when he confesses that "the least" communists were also brothers of Jesus. He blames himself for having asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" ¹³ Niemöller, himself imprisoned for seven years, still acknowledges his involvement in the murderous system. How many more were bystanders and did not even begin to question their role?

Failure of the Church

This heading plays on a third theme that the Field Study I women addressed, namely the failure of the church during the Third Reich. Using the complex dynamics surrounding the Stuttgarter *Schuldbekentnis* (confession of guilt) in 1945, this section illuminates the failure of the church precisely in its inability to comprehend and express concretely its failure during the National Socialist period.

In October 1945, the EKD council (Association of all Protestant Churches in Germany: *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*) held their first meeting in Stuttgart. Unexpectedly, an international delegation of the World Council of

¹¹Niemöller, 269. *Ich habe geschwiegen in meiner Angst um mein bisschen Leben und nicht gesprochen. . . .*

¹²*Ibid.*, 270.

¹³*Ibid.*, 269.

Churches paid a visit to the EKD council in the bombed city, reaching out to the German Protestant church representatives. Under the impression of this visit, the Stuttgart guilt declaration was written and presented to the ecumenical delegation from Geneva.

We accuse ourselves of not having prayed more faithfully, we did not confess more bravely, we did not love more ardentlyWith great pain we are saying through us unending suffering is brought to many countries and nations. . . .Throughout long years we fought in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit that found its terrifying expression in the Nazi rule of force.¹⁴

Because of church political power dynamics, Hans Asmussen's draft (one of the main architects of the Barmen declaration) was superseded by this more vague draft and with little concreteness. The Stuttgarter guilt declaration assumed that there existed a clear antithesis between Nazism and Christianity, but it neglected the ways of collaboration. This wording did not address where and how the churches were involved in allowing and supporting the murderous Nazi regime. Supported by the Allies, the churches actually fostered a distorted self-perception that they were victims of Hitler's regime themselves. At that point, it seemed that perceiving themselves as a community of victims inhibited the church's capacity to recognize their involvement and share of responsibility in precipitating the catastrophe.

Nevertheless, the Stuttgarter guilt declaration became a decisive factor in building new trust between the WCC and the EKD, also building trust with churches of neighboring countries such as Switzerland, Netherlands, England, and France.

¹⁴Rolf Rendtorff, and Hans Hermann Henrix, eds. Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945-1985 (The churches and Judaism: Documents from 1945 -1985), 2nd ed. (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1989), 528-29.

Given the premise that the church is to work towards God's kindom,¹⁵ then the failure of the church in this regard points to an even greater dilemma. Dorothee Sölle identifies the inner goal of the church as "participating in the historical liberation of God towards God's kindom."¹⁶ She views "historical liberation" as pointing in two directions: God liberates and leads his [sic] people out of Egypt still today and God herself is liberated from being hidden and incomprehensible/intangible.¹⁷ Facing simultaneously the *Shoah* and the church's failure to act as the church, the dilemma becomes visible – that God's kindom was betrayed and, building on Sölle's definition of church, the Divine remained hidden and inaccessible to human tragedy.

Critical Self-Reflection on Christian Beliefs

This section illustrates how Christian women are questioning traditional beliefs prompted by the Holocaust. In light of Christianity's complicity, not only the church's failure is in the spot light, but also the whole belief system can be considered inherently flawed and can begin to crumble.

Women from Field Study I ponder the question: "What gives me the right to say that Christianity is the only true religion even though that Christianity emerged out of Judaism?" One woman stated that "the God image must be changed. Finally, in Auschwitz the almighty God died." Another woman expressed a concern for honest theology: "it is

¹⁵Intentionally the traditional and male oriented term kingdom is changed into kindom of God, alluding to kinship. The usage of "kindom" emerged out of feminist theological circles.

¹⁶Dorothee Sölle, *Gott denken: Einführung in die Theologie* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1990), 179.

¹⁷Sölle's understanding is building on Philip Potter's perspective that the church is God's people, through the exodus into Christ's death and resurrection, created and sanctified as church. The church is called "to participate in the suffering of Christ to redeem our torn and split world." In 1983 in Vancouver, Potter presented this perspective in his report as the general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

important for me to face and to stand these abysses in humans, in order to insure that my concept of humans and of God does not become too harmless, naïve and nice."¹⁸

The first quote seems to question Christianity's classical claim for truth and superiority, and articulates how Christianity actually relates to other religions. Chapter 7 will elaborate on the task of building connections between Christians and Jews despite a separating past. The critical rethinking of Christianity's uniqueness and its claim for superiority is an important challenge addressed by people like John Cobb, John Hick, and Gordon Kaufman,¹⁹ but lies beyond the scope of this paper. The second statement appears to address the issue of a "broken God concept." The third statement expresses the need to have challenging concepts of God and humans. The concept of God is pivotal to all three of these women; thus I will focus here on a broken God concept and then search for a transformed understanding of the Divine. The second part of this chapter will dwell on the search for a post-*Shoah* spirituality.

When German Christians face the Holocaust, they not only discover that Christians were involved in bringing about unfathomable evil, but that the foundation of their belief system can be shattered. The central pillar of people's faith usually relies on a trustworthy understanding of the Divine. Such a concept influences how people relate to the Divine and to the world. When people face the *Shoah*, however, their God-concepts can easily begin to crumble; the *Shoah* pushes people toward a critical rethinking of beliefs and convictions taken for granted. What kind of issues emerge in rethinking one's God concept in light of the *Shoah*?

¹⁸Appendix A.

¹⁹John Cobb, *Christ in a Pluralistic Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975); John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, eds. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, N.Y. : Orbis Books, 1987); Gordon Kaufman, *God, Mystery, Diversity: Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

Besides Jean Baptist Metz, Dorothee Sölle was one of the few and very first theologians after the Third Reich whose theological work began with the recognition of the shattering effect of Auschwitz. Sölle points to a new outlook for theology, no longer separated from history but rather permeated by its implications. She says, "We have to own our history. Being a German after the Holocaust means that my theological concepts and the words I use to express them have no life apart from their history."²⁰ Looking closer at that history, the period of 1933–1945 was characterized by endless suffering culminating in the burning of children. In the United States, Irving Greenberg, as a Jewish theologian and Orthodox rabbi, set the stage for a new standard for theology in light of that history: "No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of the burning children."²¹ Can any theological statements at all be made in light of burning children?

Returning to the introductory concern -- how and where to envision the Divine in facing the *Shoah* -- Sölle's question pushes further. Did God disappear? Did God take a bystander role? Did God's power wane? She asks "In the face of senseless suffering the question arises: Where is this God? Is he [*sic*] watching?"²² It is precisely the people who suffer senselessly who need an almighty God. But it is precisely their fate which destroys the effort to love such a God who did not stop the trajectory of evil. Sölle's theological conclusion is radically expressed in her statement, "The God who causes suffering is not to be justified even by lifting the suffering later. No heaven can rectify Auschwitz."²³

²⁰Dorothee Sölle, *Creative Disobedience*, trans. Lawrence W. Denef (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1995), x, (first published in German in 1968).

²¹Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?*, ed. Eva Fleischner (New York: KTAV, 1977), 23.

²²Sölle, *Suffering* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 142.

²³*Ibid.*, 149.

Conclusions such as this seem to build on a twofold assumption: That the God we knew died in Auschwitz, and, in particular, the almighty God concept died in Auschwitz. In the United States, Richard Rubenstein,²⁴ and, in Germany, Dorothee Sölle, became known as representatives of the so-called "God-is-dead-theology." Given this perspective, I am suggesting that the classical theistic model with attributes of God's sovereignty of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence needs to be questioned, since this language is at the end of its palpability in facing Auschwitz. Does that mean we have to give up any God concept and turn to nihilism? Jewish and Christian post-*Shoah* theology elaborated on various ideas to rethink God's nature and God's location in our world. Acknowledging the brokenness of our God-understanding in light of the reality of burning children, Elie Wiesel suggests questioning as an appropriate way to relate to the unfamiliar Divine.²⁵

At this point, three aspects of the dilemma regarding a "broken concept" of the Divine can be identified. First is the challenge of moving from conveying answers to asking questions, and to do so within a culture characterized by an inability to ask.²⁶ Second, *Shoah* calls into question where the Divine can be found after discovering that one's faith tradition and church home were utilized to bring about the *Shoah*. Does this mean that God was not there? Third, not giving up faith after Auschwitz requires, at least, that people face ambiguity and ambivalence.

Living with a broken God concept and an awakened awareness of evil calls for a fresh perspective on God's relation to people who have perpetrated death. Genesis 4: 1-16

²⁴Rubenstein is Professor of Religion at Florida State University. He became known as one of the most radical Jewish interpreters of the Holocaust after the publication of his book After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism.

²⁵Elie Wiesel, A Journey of Faith: A Dialogue between Elie Wiesel and John Cardinal O'Connor (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1990), 71.

²⁶See Chapter 4 of this dissertation, Nadine Hauer's research study.

reports on Cain who murdered his brother Abel. This account might further illuminate the dilemma for Christians in Germany.

Where is your brother Abel?...What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ...Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." Then the Lord said to him, "not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.²⁷

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) comments on this passage by saying that Cain's mark was a protective sign, identifying him as a person under God's mercy. To me that seems to indicate a transformation of far-reaching impact: Cain, the murderer, received a mark and was thus recognizable as the guilty one; while at the same time, he was put under God's protection. Could this story serve as a metaphor? For what kind of blessing should German Christians wrestle? The stigma of having participated and brought about the Holocaust will never go away. The German people are marked as Cain was marked, but might they be marked for the protection of God's mercy as well? Facing the unfathomable guilt prompts a longing for a sign, -- a sign that empowers people to live with that past beyond excluding, repressing and silencing.

Rethinking Christian-Jewish Relations

This section highlights the dilemma regarding a broken relationship between Christians and Jews. Intentionally "Christian" is named first because it is primarily a Christian task to rethink our relationship to Jews after "the longest hatred."

Responses from the data affirm that there is a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust because, as one interviewee said, "Christianity is rooted in Judaism, and

²⁷NRSV.

nevertheless, several times in history, Christianity became guilty with respect to Jewish people." One woman identifies the loss of Jewish life in Germany: "I think it is a terrible loss for us Christians of not having practicing Jews in our country." Another woman sees the task of recovering our roots: "We Christians have our roots in Judaism; . . . we have to integrate them in a stronger way . . . and must not close our eyes to the anti-Judaistic content in the New Testament."

Women of Field Study I are thus, aware of three primary themes: (1) Christianity's relationship with Judaism, (2) the lack of Jewish life in Germany, and (3) anti-Judaistic tendencies in the New Testament. This last concern of anti-Judaistic tendencies will receive particular attention in the context of the feminist theological debate on the following pages. The focus of Chapter 7 will elaborate on themes (1) and (2) in terms of exploring ways how bridges can be built despite a separating past.

Facing Obligations for the Future

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, "obligations for the future" was the fourth topic addressed in Field Study I.²⁸ This section will begin with statements of the research interviewees, illustrating their sense of responsibility for the future. Then two additional issues will be discussed, namely anti-Judaism among feminist theologians and the issue of guilt in feminist-theological reflection. This fourth topic concerns efforts to

²⁸On a first view, "Obligations for the future" might not immediately appear to fit as part of a "The Dilemma" discussion. On a second view, those obligations illustrate what kind of prompting has emerged already out of the other dilemmas. Furthermore, the next section, "Search for a post-Shoah Spirituality," does not attempt to respond to each particular issue, but rather addresses the underlying and more foundational question: what kind of spiritual path enables women to dare to respond to the many facets of the dilemma. Therefore, it might be appropriate to indicate some already existing endeavors relating to obligations; these help elaborate the dilemma.

move beyond the topics of Christians' complicity toward critical reflection on Christian beliefs and rethinking Christian-Jewish relations.

The Field Study I women named "the task to watch that this does not continue," namely that Christians do not continue violating Judaism. Furthermore they expressed "special responsibility that Christianity can still be able to be trusted." They want "to contribute to insure that something like that never happens again," and they feel "responsibility for protecting human life." One of the women reflects her relationship to the church by asking: "I am a small part of the church, but I also carry responsibility. Where do I resist contempt and injustice, like Jesus did?"

In the following section, I go beyond themes that the interview women identified. At the intersection of feminist and Holocaust studies, two themes need to be addressed: The Anti-Judaism debate and discussions on guilt are both crucial for women in dealing with obligations that arise from encounters with the Holocaust.

The Anti-Judaism Debate

The anti-Judaism debate in Germany represents the painful process of self-contextualization in feminist theology. In Germany, as elsewhere, it has been difficult to include the unfathomable challenge of the Holocaust in feminist theological thinking.

At the 1998 American Academy of Religion /Society of Biblical Literature conference in Orlando, Florida, Rachel Adler's reflections on "Pour Out Your Heart Like Water: Toward a Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust" were presented. She identified social optimism as one of the premises and reasons why Jewish feminism, until recently, did not participate in Holocaust theology. The difficulty in coming to terms with "evil," revealed in the industry of death, unearths a dimension which goes far beyond social reconstruction. Not only Jewish but, even more, Christian feminists have struggled to put "Holocaust" on their agenda.

Britta Jüngst points out that the anti-Judaism debate among feminist theologians during the late 1980s played a decisive role in providing meaning for the self-contextualization of feminist theology in Germany.²⁹ Britta Jüngst observed that the Anti-Judaism debate centered around theological anti-Judaism rather than on the *Shoah* itself. Therefore, she asked whether the experience of the *Shoah* was faced and allowed at all among the perpetrators.³⁰ Christian theological reflection which is aware of the Shoah has to take into account those unfathomable experiences, and must allow itself to be deeply disturbed and unsettled by them. According to Britta Jüngst, the debate on Anti-Judaism in Germany precipitated an enormous sensitizing in feminist theology. Today, the question of Anti-Judaism can be considered as the *Gretchenfrage* (crucial question in Goethe's *Dr. Faustus*) of feminist theology in Germany.³¹

How to Talk about Guilt?

What is responsible talk of guilt in light of women's predicament of knowing both victim and victimizer experiences? Christina Thürmer-Rohr's concept of women's complicity (Chapter Four) assumes that women were and still are actively involved in maintaining oppressive systems. Thürmer-Rohr developed her analysis as a feminist sociologist and did not intend to imply a moral dimension in terms of addressing women's guilt. But then she restated her perspective in saying:

Up to now I have thought that the concept of women's complicity should not pose the question of guilt. I've changed my mind. The analysis of complicity does not, like the legal concept, assume consciousness of the crime, knowledge of the goal, dedication to its intentions, the will to commit the "criminal act". Instead of asking

²⁹In 1986 and 1987 two conferences offered a stage to address "Feministische Theologie und Jüdisch-christliches Gespräch" and "Feministische Theologie als Beitrag zum jüdisch-christlichen Dialog." The term *Selbst-Kontextualisierung* was presented by Christine Schaumberger on Jan. 25, 1994 at the Humboldt Universität Berlin.

³⁰Jüngst, 128. *Wurde die Erfahrung der Shoah auf der TäterInneseite als Erfahrung überhaupt zugelassen?*

³¹*Ibid.*, 104.

for empirical evidence of guilt, it asks about the character of the involvement of the woman as a patriarchal constructed sex within the overall historical complex.³²

Feminist research unearthed two tendencies related to how society and women themselves handle the issue of women and guilt. First, women were assumed to be responsible for the "fall" and hence are blamed for evil in the world. Western history knows the equating of women with sin and evil. Even today, many women sense overwhelming guilt feelings and easily take responsibility for social failures. Feminists reject this devastating heritage and are reluctant to address women's sin at all - still suspicious of a patriarchal attack on women. Second, women's passive role and exclusion from "dirty politics" have led to a withdrawal into the clean and harmonious private realm. For a long time, only men were considered as the perpetrators of Nazi atrocities. Women remained the innocent beings who cared for others, but were "not stained by reality." This exclusion from public life was connected with passivity, reflected in utterances such as, "I cannot do anything about it."³³

The Berlin initiative "Frauen gegen Antisemitismus" (Women against Anti-Semitism) listed features of female guilt, which they called complicity:

1. Motivation to uplift oneself and devalue others through materialistic gains, through excluding others in daily female life, and through recognizing oneself ideologically as *Aryan*.

³²Christina Thürmer-Rohr, *Vagabundinnen. Feministische Essays* (Vagabonds. Feminist essays) (Berlin: Orlando Frauenverlag, 1990), 147. *Bisher habe ich immer die Auffassung vertreten, 'Mittäterschaft der Frau' solle ein Begriff sein, der die Schuld-Frage nicht stelle. Mittlerweile habe ich diese Meinung geändert. Die Analyse der Mittäterschaft setzt zwar nicht, wie der juristische Begriff, ein Tatbewusstsein voraus, die Kenntnis des Ziels, das Eingeweihtsein in seine Absichten, die bewusste Komplizenschaft, den Willen zur 'Straftat'. Vielmehr fragt sie statt nach dem empirischen Schuldnachweis nach dem Charakter der Beteiligung der Frau als patriarchal gemachtes Geschlecht an der historischen Gesamthandlung*

³³Sölle considers this statement as the "most godless statement of everyday life" (*Theology for Skeptics*, 48).

2. Renouncing oneself in support of men by delegating dominance to the man and by being partisan for the man, such as giving him support, keeping silent on behalf of his deeds, and exonerating him.³⁴

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki in her article defining "sin" contrasts traditional and feminist concepts of sin.³⁵ In 1960 Valerie Saiving suggested that the equation of sin and pride is a construct applicable to men more than to women. Given the social circumstances of women's upbringing, women's sin might more often be triviality rather than pride. Judith Plaskow and Susan Nelson Dunfee built on this and brought to the forefront women's "sin of hiding," influenced by women's reluctance and fear to become their own selves.³⁶ The traditional understanding emphasized sin within individuals who rebelled against God. Feminists and womanists take much more of the social context of sin into consideration, including its ecological, social, and personal dimensions. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki states that "the pervasiveness of sin follows from the competitiveness of finite life and the dynamic this creates to protect and perpetuate one's own kind over against those who are perceived as different."³⁷

³⁴Frauen gegen Antisemitismus, "Der Nationalsozialismus als Extremform des Patriarchats: Zur Leugnung der Täterschaft von Frauen und zur Tabuisierung des Antisemitismus in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus" (National Socialism as an extreme form of patriarchy: On the denial of women's complicity and tabooization of anti-Semitism in confronting the National Socialism), Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis 35 (1993): 77-89.

³⁵Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Sin," in Dictionary of Feminist Theologies, eds. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 261-62.

³⁶Susan Nelson Dunfee, "The Sin of Hiding: A Feminist Critique of Reinhold Niebuhr's Account of the Sin of Pride," 65 Soundings, (fall 1982): 316-27; Judith Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980)

³⁷Suchocki, "Sin," 262.

In summary, the *Shoah* poses an essential dilemma for German Christian women. The problem is not only Christianity's complicity in precipitating the Holocaust through its long history of hatred, but also Christians' involvement in it and the churches failure to resist. The section on "Broken God-concept" unearthed the necessity to question, to deal with the unknown location of the Divine and to acknowledge ambiguity in the God-concept. In face of these dilemmas, can descendants of the perpetrators ask for a new blessing? The metaphor and interpretation of Cain's mark may suggest this possibility.

What has been presented thus far points in a direction and gives some hope for responding. This lays groundwork for a post-Shoah spirituality, which has yet to emerge in completeness and concreteness. Facing the essential dilemma of the *Shoah*, the following spiritual tasks emerge. First, Luther's point of the "Christian disposition to collaborate with the incarnation of all evil" posts the necessity for Christians to integrate a century-old shadow in an ongoing process of *metanoia*. Second, acknowledging the ambiguity of an almighty God concept can shatter one's basic trust and demand a rethinking of human-divine relationship. Finally, acknowledging fundamental anti-Judaistic threads in Christian doctrines requires a cleansing process in one's faith tradition.

In the following section, we will further identify clues for a post-*Shoah* spirituality. Since the thesis of this dissertation is that German women can be empowered to relate to the Holocaust heritage, it is crucial to explore sources, or spiritual wells, from which to get energy to undertake such a task. During the last decades, the Third Reich became one of the best scholarly researched areas, but the gap between intellectual knowledge and the average person's capacity to relate to the *Shoah* is very prominent. Therefore, I will not attempt to tackle all of the tasks unearthed above in the "dilemma." I will, instead, address the underlying question for a post-*Shoah* spirituality, one which empowers people to dare to launch into such a tedious journey.

Search for a Post-*Shoah* Spirituality

Keeping in mind the above-named dimensions of the dilemma, the question emerges as to where do we get the spiritual energy with which to respond? Is there a spiritual path which frees the perpetrator from petrification? One woman in Field Study I stated, "As a Christian there is an opportunity to deal with the Holocaust in seeking refuge in the merciful God who grants a new beginning and [thus] haunting feelings of guilt can be dared to be confronted." How and where do we find this trust, that there is still a merciful God?

The religious tradition which usually would invite a search for spiritual and theological resources is precisely the same one which contributed to the predicament. In a seminar, a classmate once distinguished between religion and spirituality in quoting an unknown source, "Religion is for those who are afraid of hell; spirituality is for those who went through hell."³⁸ What kind of spirituality fosters the courage to face the abyss of the *Shoah* as a Christian? I utilize here an understanding of spirituality that de-emphasizes institutional teachings, but relies largely on one's practiced faith, finding expression in concrete life utterances and in connections with a faith community and global concerns.

Searching for a spirituality which enables Christians to face the abyss of the *Shoah* must offer space for a whole variety of contradictory emotional, intellectual, and existential responses, including protest, anger, anxiety, longing for reconciliation, mourning, and silence. After a severe trauma, people are often unable to find adequate language. After the *Shoah*, people have not yet found an adequate language for comprehending and expressing the reality of incredible evil that Christians did to their Jewish brothers and sisters. In which theological language can we take refuge? Traditional formulations such as "asking

³⁸Martha Manning, Undercurrents: A Therapist's Reckoning with Her Own Depression (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 178.

for forgiveness" easily rub new salt into wounds.³⁹ There must be a long process between evil and forgiveness. This section addresses that long process, drawing upon four metaphors. The first is drawn from post-*Shoah* theological reflections, the second and third from biblical texts, and the fourth, from contemporary reflections on faith. We begin with the metaphor of opening a window of vulnerability in impenetrable walls.

Walls and the Window of Vulnerability

The metaphor of "wall" has appeared again and again in previous pages. Dan Bar-On employed the idea of a double wall between the first generation and second generation to describe the taboo of addressing the Holocaust. In a comparison between South-Africa and Nazi Germany, Dorothee Sölle spoke about the invisible wall that exists when people do not know the reality of their own country, which includes our present perceptions of Third World countries from the perspective of a tourist and "not the perspective of a sister or a brother."⁴⁰ The inability to respond to the question "Where is your brother? Where is your sister?" is sin according to Sölle and Fulbert Steffensky.⁴¹

What process needs to occur that women of the second and third generation can allow themselves to feel the wall and to interrupt the cycle of silence between the generations, opening to the suffering of victims? Sölle expressed in a different context during the 1980s the need for a window of vulnerability in order to survive. Erected walls do not protect; rather they take away the air we need to breathe.

³⁹Simon Wiesenthal, The Sunflower: An Inquiry into the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness, rev. ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1997).

⁴⁰C. F. Beyers Naude and Dorothee Sölle, Hope for Faith: A Conversation, Risk Book Series, no. 31 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986), 9.

⁴¹Dorothee Sölle and Fulbert Steffensky, Not Just Yes and Amen: Christians with a Cause (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 14-18. This understanding of sin seems to correspond to two qualities already identified in the dilemma of a broken God concept, namely to question and to identify God's new location in the world.

The window of vulnerability
must be closed-
so the military say
to justify the arms race

My skin
is a window of vulnerability
without moisture, without touching
I must die

The window of vulnerability
is being walled up
my land
cannot live

We need light
so we can think
we need air
so we can breathe
we need a window
open toward heaven.⁴²

Speaking not only of the arms race, but also of facing the Holocaust, we need windows for light and air. An initial interpretation might assume that courage is necessary in order to open a window of vulnerability.⁴³ On a second view it becomes obvious that this is rather a question of survival. "God wants to make us alive, and the wider we open our hearts to others or the more audibly we cry out against the injustices which rule over us, the more difficult our life in the rich society of injustice becomes."⁴⁴ The price for being alive will be the pain of feeling the injustice surrounding people.

⁴²Dorothee Sölle, *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), vii. Used by permission.

⁴³The metaphor of heart is also employed in a rabbinical saying: If we open our heart as far as the eye of a needle, then God will open it as far as the temple entrance.

⁴⁴Dorothee Sölle, *Theology for Skeptics. Reflections on God*, trans. Joyce L. Irwin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 103.

Bent-Over Woman

The following section explores a biblical metaphor which might function in a double way: to interpret the draining process of dealing with the dilemma described in section one, and also to offer hope for women to live with their victim/perpetrator heritage. Luke's account of the bent over woman (Luke 13) introduces the reader to the challenge that someone faces in simultaneously attending to a victim heritage and the responsibilities emerging from a perpetrator heritage.

And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. (Luke 13:11-12)

For 18 years, this woman's ailment forced her, almost literally, only to see what was directly surrounding her. Her horizon and worldview seemed to have been seriously "crippled." In a similar way today, a perpetrator heritage can distort and cripple people in a serious and life threatening way. In the context of post-Holocaust dynamics, this crippling of the spirit can be interpreted as the inability to ask questions, or an unhealthy bondage to parents (justified as obedience), or a narrowing of care to an elitist circle of kinship, as Chapter 4 unearthed. Being bent over may also reflect the attitude that "as a woman I can't do anything."

Looking at the victim heritage and experiences in an oppressive and patriarchal society, most women know the wounds of enforced male domination in personal encounters or structural imposition. For many women, identification with the bent over woman seems easy to make because women feel the link between the bent woman's visible ailment and their own invisible bent posture in a patriarchal context.

The account of the bent-over woman can address both the crippling spirit of a perpetrator and a victim heritage. The healing may have occurred in part through her

desire to arise, evoked because she had been called from the back to the forefront of the synagogue. Gaining the ability to rise is the focal point of her healing. This movement of her body may be interpreted as embracing, also, an inner transformation; namely learning to leave her familiar bent-over identity and welcoming the challenge to live straight with a wider horizon. As the bent-over woman's horizon extends unexpectedly, her awareness increases about what is happening around her. Assuming that her healing embraces also that process of learning to relate to a wider horizon, it can be called "learning to see with her heart."

Four examples reveal ways by which people can learn to see with their heart in regard to the Holocaust heritage. Two women of Field Study I mentioned the shock they felt when they realized that they could read and understand original documents in Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, and thereby discovered existentially that the language of the perpetrators was their mother tongue. In their situation, learning to see with the heart meant allowing the self to be touched by the pain of Jewish victims, which was caused by those whose language was one's mother tongue.

Katrin S, a participant of the 1995 exchange program, reflects on the group's visit in Auschwitz:

I think it was a chance we missed when we left out . . . the central tower at the entrance of the annihilation camp of Birkenau, from which the SS-guards could watch the inmates and keep them under control . . . the view from the watchtower conveyed the perspective of the perpetrator. . . . In my view of this temptation that comes with the position of superiority, I became afraid of my own feelings. My own certainty that I would, if called upon, fight against a national-socialist terror regime began to crumble.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Appendix C, "Living in a Post-Shoah World," 1995.

In Kathrin's situation, learning to see with the heart meant allowing oneself to be scared by the awareness of one's own potential to cooperate with evil. This insight was suppressed as early as Luther's time, thereby contributing to anti-Judaistic tendencies.

Lore Walb honestly faces her journal entries as a young girl fascinated by National Socialism; she finally works through that past as a retired person, thereby integrating facts she had excluded at that time. In her situation, learning to see with the heart meant allowing one's self to be shocked by one's ignorance.

Hildegunde Wöller, a well-known freelance writer and theologian, talks about a series of cruel dreams she had after watching the film *Holocaust* some years ago. In her dream, an SA-man supervises the torture and killing of people. Since the dream returned again and again, she finally took her courage into her hands⁴⁶ and worked with a therapist to understand that dream. She had to learn to acknowledge, "*Auch in mir, Jahrgang 1938, steckt ein vernichtender SA-Mann* (In me also -- born in 1938 --, there is a destructive SA man)."⁴⁷ Her interpretation of that painful process reads: "*Das gänzlich Inakzeptable bedroht unsere Identität, es anzunehmen gleicht einem Sterben* (Our identity is threatened by the totally unacceptable; to welcome that feels like dying)."⁴⁸ This example illustrates that learning to see with the heart is listening to one's dreams and facing the truth of one's unconsciousness. Learning to see with the heart also means feeling the threat of annihilation.

These four stories reveal bent-over women who chose not to seek a quick refuge in traditional religious language or make a vague guilt confession. They allowed themselves to experience the closeness and concreteness of the *Shoah*, as Britta Jüngst has pointed

⁴⁶The German idiom *sich ein Herz nehmen* still keeps the connotation between courage and heart.

⁴⁷Hildegunde Wöller, *HerzensTore: Zwölf Wege zum inneren Leben* (Doors of the heart: Twelve paths to inner life) (München: Kösel, 1997), 72.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 72.

out. They felt the shame of belonging to the perpetrator nation. Shame can cause withdrawal, but also can push towards change. Dorothee Sölle points out that "shame, however, is a revolutionary emotion, as Karl Marx once said: it changes those who venture to go through it."⁴⁹ The very bentness of these women opened them to a painful but healing touch.

In summary, both windows of vulnerability and the experience of the bent-over woman demand that one get in touch with one's own potential to cooperate with evil. In this way, a person can discover one's own complicity with evil structures, one's specific blind spots, how these contribute to maintaining the system, and how one might be healed to stand straight.

Wrestling as a Rite of Passage

In addition to the bent over woman, another valuable image emerges from the biblical witness. Jacob's wrestling at the river (Genesis 32) introduce the reader to the challenge a person faces in attending to an ambiguous religious heritage. The biblical account describes Jacob's wrestling with the unknown and ambiguous opponent, and in the larger Jacob story, it represents a rite of passage.

Jacob was let alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him....But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob"...The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. Genesis 32: 22-32

Having been attacked by an unknown person, Jacob experienced this fight as wrestling with one who assaults and later blesses. Dorothee Sölle argues, "Jacob's struggle is a contest with an angel and to that extent, holds a middle ground between the devil and

⁴⁹Sölle, Creative Disobedience, ix.

God, taking up traits of both."⁵⁰ Sölle interprets Jacob's struggle as wrestling with God "to press God so hard that God becomes God and lives out more than God's dark side."⁵¹ This demand is echoed in Carl Gustav Jung's "Answer to Job." This wrestling in the night urges God to become God and reveals that God cannot become God without humans. Through his perseverance in wrestling, Jacob not only gained a divine blessing in terms of God's protection and presence on his subsequent journey, but he also received a new identity in light of his accomplished wrestling with the Divine.

Unfortunately, the Protestant tradition did not teach us to wrestle with God. Rather the Protestant tradition taught its believers to obey. Obedience was seen as a key determinant for a faithful disciple. But Auschwitz calls radically into question obedience in any form, in particular, the traditions of obedience which supported one another and helped to nurture the totalitarianism of the Third Reich. In contrast, Darrell Fasching points out that the Jewish narrative tradition of *chutzpah* emphasized a tradition of arguing with God as a faithful response to the covenant.⁵² Today, wrestling with God may be one of the very few ways to keep up a faith relationship after the *Shoah*.

Wrestling in light of the *Shoah* can express the tension between controversial emotions in oneself especially for a German woman of the second and third generation. Through wrestling, one can resist the temptation to jump to one or the other side, either the victim side (belittling oneself) or the perpetrator side (carrying too much of the burden). In ancient times, receiving a new name meant also receiving a new identity. Through wrestling with the perpetrator heritage in light of one's faith tradition, one may experience several results. First, a person may survive the night but walk with pain like Jacob. Second, one may wrestle as a rite of passage and then feel free to continue one's life

⁵⁰Sölle, *Theology for Skeptics*, 53.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 55.

⁵²Fasching, *Narrative Theology after Auschwitz*, 51.

journey. Third, one may be dramatically shaped by that deep experience and receive a new identity, an expression of a transformed relationship to the Divine.

For all these reasons, wrestling is critical for people in conflicted or tense life situations. C. F. Beyers Naude's wrestling illustrates how this looked in the context of apartheid in South Africa. After three decisive events in his life, he finally could take a stand against apartheid. His theological studies had revealed that there is no biblical foundation for apartheid and he entered a theological crisis. Then, other concerned pastors shared the dilemmas that they experienced in ministering to Black congregations, whereupon he decided to visit those oppressed congregations and families. Seeing concretely the deeply entrenched injustice, he felt totally "lost." Finally, when the massacre in Sharpeville in 1960 occurred, he knew that he had to make his stand publicly known to support those people violated by his white brothers. He said, "There was no option, except to stand by what I then had discovered to be the truth."⁵³ This example of Beyers Naude, as of Jacob, suggests that wrestling requires painful effort and can be understood as a pivotal and decisive rite of passage in one's faith journey.

Movement on a Faith Journey

One further metaphor is critical for a post-*Shoah* spirituality. That is the metaphor of movement on a journey of faith. This image is shaped by biblical narratives, and also by contemporary reflections on faith and faith development. Consider, for example, the journeys of Abraham and Sarah, Jacob, Ruth and Naomi, Jesus and Paul. These are people, according to biblical accounts, who made challenging journeys which transformed every dimension of their lives.

Two theoretical interpretations of faith development may further illuminate the process which occurs in journeys of faith. James Fowler, the most influential author of

⁵³C. F. Beyers Naude and Dorothee Sölle, Hope for Faith: A Conversation (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986), 7.

faith development theory, assumes that one passes through several stages during one's faith journey. The fifth stage is called "conjunctive faith" and refers to the God-concept that Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) developed at the end of the Middle Ages. In his understanding, God is the *coincidentia oppositorum* - "the coincidence of opposites" - the being wherein all opposites and polarities and even contradictions come together and are reconciled. Carl Gustav Jung employed this idea as well, talking about the "conjunction of opposites" in many of his psychological writings. According to Fowler, the conjunctive faith stage emerges at a time in one's life when contradictions and paradoxical elements need to be integrated. Fowler's understanding of conjunctive faith provides stimulating background for the search in this work to bring together polarities, such as the victim and perpetrator heritage in women.

Karl-Ernst Nipkow offers yet another model by recalling Martin Luther's position, perceiving stages of growing temptation and growing confidence in God. Recalling Luther in the context of being aware of his detrimental contribution to anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in Europe is notable. I am doing so because I am wrestling with the exact question of whether the Christian heritage is still to be considered valid, or -- in respect to Luther, in particular -- whether it needs to be completely invalidated, or even abandoned. Despite his hateful tirades against Jews, however, or perhaps because of his hate, Luther harbored a deep insight into the human capacity for evil. In this discussion, Luther's insight sheds significant light into core issues of the human faith journey. Instead of a progressive and almost hierarchical growth, such as Fowler is suggesting, Luther talks about a movement of increased attachment and faith intensity. The journey leads to the bottom. Luther was convinced that if one is living his/her life without great mischief, one's faith will be weak because it has not been "tested." This can dramatically change when someone is confronted with God's hiddenesss (*deus absconditus*) in human suffering. Feeling God's wrath upon him/her (and it may even appear as if God withdraws completely in the sense

of "God forsakenness"), faith can soar by keeping the paradoxical confidence in God as *sub contrario*. This faith journey to the bottom can occur any day in one's life, not only during the mature phase. Therefore, Luther's thoughts might be quite applicable for those who feel "at the bottom" of their faith.

The perpetrator heritage for Christians can indeed lead to "bottom" faith experiences. Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt identified the post-war realities of Germany as an avoided nation; this reality emerged because tens of thousands of victims still suffer from the aftermath of their victimization. Many of these victims do not want to enter Germany again, and want to avoid all contact with Germans. Marquardt suggests that "developing an ethos and an ethic of being avoided would be a first step to *metanoia* and be a real practical help for us victorious and power-aware and self-confident Christians."⁵⁴

Pushing even further prompts the questions: Who might serve as role models? How do people learn a counter-cultural and spiritual attitude of feeling the pain of the victims, while acknowledging the burden of a perpetrator heritage, as they travel on their faith journeys? Dorothee Sölle gives one important clue by pointing to the mystery of faith as embracing the pain of the world. She says that "one cannot understand the mystery of faith if one does not know the pain of the world."⁵⁵ In her theological thinking, faith and pain are inseparable.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Martin Stöhr, "Christsein nach Auschwitz" (Being Christian after Auschwitz) in *Glaube und Hoffnung nach Auschwitz. Jüdisch-christliche Dialoge. Vorträge. Diskussionen* eds. Peter von der Osten-Sacken and Martin Stöhr (Berlin: Selbstverlag Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1980), 63. *Ein Ethos und eine Ethik des Gemiedenseins wäre ein Schritt der Umkehr und wirklich praktische Hilfe für uns sieg- und macht- und selbstbewusste Christen zugleich.*

⁵⁵Sölle, *Das Recht auf ein anderes Glück* (The right for another fortune) (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1992), 51. *Man kann das Geheimnis des Glaubens nicht verstehen, wenn man nichts von den Schmerzen der Welt weiss.*

⁵⁶In her latest book *Mystik und Widerstand: Du stilles Geschrei* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1997), Dorothee Sölle identifies additional areas of mystical experience besides suffering and pain, such as nature, erotic, community and joy; but

The reflections thus far suggest the importance of finding spiritual resources that enable people to embrace paradoxes, journey to the bottom of life experiences, and embrace pain. Given the long history of mystical experience in most religions, what understanding of mystical experience is compatible with these challenges and with the concerns of feminist theology which we considered earlier? How might mystical experience respond to feminist concerns by honoring contextualization, drawing upon the authority of women's experience, and understanding the Divine in a relational and empowering way for women? To respond to these questions, a mystical person will be presented as a role model.

Consider Julian of Norwich, who powerfully embodied the mystery of embracing the pain of the world and of moving ever-deeper on a committed faith journey. Julian lived as an anchoress in Norwich, England, in the late 14th century. A maidservant lived with her in a cell affiliated with the parish Church of St. Julian in Conisford at Norwich, not far from a house of Augustinian Friars. Julian's own theological insights emerged out of her mystical experience in the trying time during which she faced a life-threatening physical disease. She says the "greatest pain that I felt was my shortness of breath and the ebbing of my life."⁵⁷ According to Leclercq, who wrote the preface to Julian of Norwich: Showings, Julian's sickness might be called a "creative illness" or "creative malady" today.⁵⁸ Whatever the cause, Julian experienced sixteen "showings," or "revelations of God's love," during her illness. She described these showings in a book and continued, throughout her life, to write and reflect on these experiences. In her later and longer version of Showings, Julian presents a deep understanding of contemplative prayer "as the working of mercy and

which I will not pursue at this time.

⁵⁷Ibid., 127.

⁵⁸I recall Lore Walb who got sick on her journey facing the hitherto excluded truth of her youth and early adulthood in the Third Reich.

grace, desire and fulfillment . . ."59 Historically, women and men who have dedicated their lives to God have had a great impact on their surroundings. Julian was no exception.

A study of Julian's life reveals three characteristic features of mystical life which are relevant for our search. Her faith journey was grounded in a deep sense of divine goodness and blessing. She knew and cared deeply about the historically contextual suffering of her fellow humans, especially the suffering caused by the plague which ravaged civilization at that time. Even though she lived as an anchoress, her mystical path was connected to political actions and social conflicts of her time. These features of her spirituality help to clarify the definition of her mystical path, which shows the compatibility of mystical and feminist liberation theologies. Julian's spirituality was rooted in experience, in personal transformation, in deep awareness of Divine presence within frightening and ecstatically joyful experiences, and in welcoming and embracing the suffering of the world, even through physical illness (which served as a rite of passage).

Contemporary theological reflections, such as process theology, similarly emphasize that everything and everyone, including the Divine, are intricately involved in a network of ongoing relational processes. Marjorie Suchocki, a leading feminist process theologian, makes the connection between the ambiguity of life and the holy: "We know God in and through the ambiguities of our personal and cultural histories."⁶⁰ This relational understanding allows people to locate the Divine both in closeness and in ambiguity. Both dimensions of the Divine are crucial for responding to the dilemma of a "broken god concept" discussed earlier. Sölle points out, "Without the God-within-us, this God-above-us hardens into a fetish who willed Auschwitz."⁶¹ I would emphasize also the

⁵⁹Julian of Norwich, *Showings* trans. and introd. by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 26.

⁶⁰Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 53.

⁶¹Sölle, *Theology for Skeptics*, 48.

God-between-us, who will bring a solution to the dilemma we currently are called to engage.

What did we learn further from mystics about the God-between-us? Why turn to the mystics at all?

*Wenn all Menschen ein paar Liebende wären,
so fiele der Unterschied zwischen Mystik und Nicht-Mystik weg.*⁶²

In the introduction to *Mystik und Widerstand*, Sölle makes a link between concerns of feminist liberation theology and mystics by pointing out the crucial relationship between mystical experience and a political, praxis-oriented frame of reference.⁶³

The relationships stirred by mystical experience — relationships with God and with praxis — call forth, yet again, the importance of seeing and teaching by heart. In the earlier discussion of the bent-over woman, learning to see **by heart** was discussed. In Chapter 8, teaching **by heart** will be proposed. Both utilize the metaphor of heart, which is so prominent in mystical experience. Underlying this metaphor is the significance of relational experience, and of human and divine love, in the human journey of faith. The Catholic lay theologian Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925) interpreted religion as a unity of the institutional element, the intellectual element, and the mystical element. In Christianity, the apostle Peter may symbolize the historical-institutional dimension, the apostle Paul may represent the analytical-speculative dimension, and John may embody the intuitive-emotional dimension. Relative to a search for a post-*Shoah* spirituality, this third dimension seems to correspond most profoundly with the challenges posed by the dilemma of *Shoah* for Christians' faith journeys.

⁶²Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772-1801, a German romantic writer, known as "Novalis" and quoted in Dorothee Sölle, *Mystik und Widerstand*, 25. (If all people would be a group of lovers, then the difference between mystic and non-mystic could be neglected.)

⁶³*Ibid.*, 17.

Given the awareness that not all mystical experience may have contributed to a transformation of the world, I join Sölle's interest in mystical experience which holds the ability to embrace the pain of the world and still to rest in the Divine. The relational dimension of the Divine can be understood in Sölle's statement, "There is an integration into sisterly ground of the living. The mystical certainty that nothing can separate us from the love of God grows when we ourselves become one with love by placing ourselves, freely and without guarantee of success, on the side of love."⁶⁴ A shift has occurred from the distant Divine to a relational one. In this way, mystical people have a deep awareness of what Luther eloquently described in human experience as being *justus et peccator*, that is, justified and sinner. They reveal the deep and transformative movements of a faith journey.

If the faith journey I describe seems to surpass expression by regular language, we will need other ways to "witness" it. Elie Wiesel frequently described the limitations of language in conveying the experience of those who survived and perished in the Holocaust. He strongly emphasizes what the role of a witness would be. Regarding the silent conversion process among the perpetrator community, the question arises: Is there also a need for witnessing *metanoia* at a time when language may not yet available? Two examples from former chapters come into mind: Lore Walb identified the political psychologist Bauriedl a companion in her process, and Ruth Laibson from the Interfaith Council on the Holocaust, Philadelphia, was the observer of the exchange programs in 1989, 1991, 1993, and 1995. Both were able to witness *metanoia* in others. Recalling Nelle Morton's encouragement of "hearing someone into speech," I wonder how descendants of the perpetrator nation can develop a language for the conversion process with the support of companions who hear them into speech.⁶⁵ Although an adequate

⁶⁴Sölle, *Theology for Skeptics*, 50.

⁶⁵Nelle Morton, *Journey is Home* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

language is not yet available, we still need willing witnesses until one's own fragile testimony can emerge and one's faith journey can be transformed.

This chapter has mapped out the dilemma that Christians face in acknowledging the impact of the *Shoah* on their faith, including its cognitive, emotional and relational dimensions. The following clues for a post-*Shoah* spirituality were identified by drawing from the four metaphors of opening a window of vulnerability, the bent-over woman, Jacob's wrestling, and movement on one's faith journey. The emerging clues acknowledge that a healing process takes into account both the victim and perpetrator heritage; a maturing process involves wrestling with the ambiguity of one's faith tradition and the Divine. Chapter 8 will further elaborate on distinct religious educational practices building on a post-*Shoah* spirituality. These are hints, not manuals, for achieving a post-*Shoah* spirituality. They are prompted by a hermeneutic of hunger and no longer by a hermeneutic of suspicion.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Sölle, *Mystik und Widerstand*, 71.

CHAPTER 7

Building Connection Despite a Separating Past

In Chapter 1 the central purpose of post-Holocaust education was identified -- a dual task of identity formation in each distinctive community and encountering "the other" across communities. In this chapter, particular attention is given to the second task in exploring how one might build connections despite a separating past. In previous chapters, we have already addressed implications of the Holocaust's historical distance, particularly in regard to issues of the second and third generation, and in regard to differences between the discourse and ethos in Jewish and German communities during intervening decades. Exploring how to build connection despite a separating past requires us to look closely at the complexity of the present situation. For instance, contemporary Jews are not just descendants of victims; nor are contemporary Germans just descendants of perpetrators. When they try to interact today, other influential factors, such as their religious community, gender, generation, class, and educational background, come into play.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first to uncover complexity related to current interactions, and second to identify educational possibilities which arise in the midst of that complexity. To accomplish this, a case study will be presented as an educational experiment in building connections. Reflections will be made on the case, drawing insights from theoretical constructs on diversity by people such as Audre Lorde, Björn Krondorfer, and the Stone Center research team. The final part of this chapter will focus on educational insights for building connections despite a separating past.

Case Study

Every year, a retreat is held with students and faculty of five seminaries in Southern California. The purpose of this retreat (InterSem) is to build relationships and interreligious understanding. The value of presenting InterSem as a case study in this work is twofold: to

add concreteness to the endeavor of grappling with complexity and difference, and to illustrate a connection-building educational experience. The case can help clarify what needs to be learned if we want to build connection across communities. The presentation of the case study will follow the steps of first describing the case, then analyzing and interpreting related patterns arising from the data and, finally identifying pertinent conclusions. The InterSem experience will be described as an example of education in interreligious dialogue. The description itself will give a picture of the hosting institute, the planning process, the overall retreat and one workshop during the retreat. This will be followed by analysis and interpretation.

Description

The Hosting Institute

The National Conference for Community and Justice (formerly called the National Conference of Christians and Jews) serves as the hosting institute of InterSem. The program began in 1971 when Rabbi Alfred Wolf and Monsignor Royal Vadakin, founders of the Interreligious Council of Southern California, saw the importance of interreligious interaction at the seminary level "to assist the students in their preparation for religious leadership in a pluralistic society."¹ The central goal has persisted over time: "to reduce prejudice and increase understanding and awareness of differences among participants through the dialogue process. In this way, the participants will be able to take the interreligious experience back into their own communities."² The participants in InterSem come from the University of Judaism, Hebrew Union College, Fuller Theological Seminary, Claremont School of Theology, and St. John's Seminary. These represent Conservative and Reform Judaism, evangelical and mainline Protestantism, and Roman

¹Information provided by the NCCJ, information flyer.

²Ibid.

Catholicism respectively. The Planning Committee represented all five seminaries, 66% male and 33% female.

The Planning Process

The planning for InterSem 1999 followed the annual procedure where a group of seminarians and faculty representatives came together to plan the next InterSem during a period of 5 months, meeting on a monthly basis. Staff people from NCCJ provided administrative support. In 1998-99, Karen Dalton, Associate Dean of Claremont School of Theology, and Janet Sternfeld Davis, staff person of NCCJ, chaired the meetings. Even though women chaired the meetings during the interactions and group discussions, male voices were much more in evidence than female voices. I was on the Planning Committee and perceived InterSem as an unique opportunity to address the topic of the Holocaust in a setting where Christians and Jews from various denominations gathered to foster interreligious dialogue. I encountered several issues. First, because of the strong male presence and a lesser female participation, I had to let go of my hope to have an educational encounter among women of various faith traditions. Second, everyone was so busy and the planning meetings were so packed, that personal encounters and time for getting to know each other were scarcely possible. Third, the strain of introducing the Holocaust topic in the presence of eight Jewish people whom I did not know made me feel as though I were "walking on egg shells." At various times, I was quite unsure how to interpret silence and what seemed to be reluctance from the Jewish group. Despite those issues, the Planning Committee decided that a workshop on Holocaust would be offered at the retreat.

One evening, Amnon, a 66 year-old student at Hebrew Union College (HUC), called and presented his ideas on possible Holocaust workshop content. We deliberated on how to find a personal level of communication and how to strengthen opportunities for other participants to enter into the conversation. Amnon and I agreed to present a

statement based on our personal experience, and then to open the dialogue for everyone's participation. Jennifer, a young rabbinical student from HUC, volunteered as a group facilitator.

The Overall Retreat

The InterSem retreat, "Partners in Renewal," took place on February 21-22, 1999, at a Jewish hilltop camp north of Malibu, California, with a gorgeous view of the ocean. The structure of the retreat was intended to reflect its educational goals. Deviating from the classic understanding of interreligious dialogue as a conversation among theological experts, InterSem emphasized direct encounters. At the very beginning, attitudes and skills for interfaith dialogue were discussed as groundrules for this retreat. Each faith group (Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) had prepared an abbreviated worship service of their tradition, to be followed with a panel discussion of various perspectives from that tradition. Each group was limited to one hour for the presentation of the worship service and the panel. After each service and panel, conversation groups met and held debriefings on the respective experiences. These small groups consisted of about ten participants each and were mixed with regard to faith tradition. They met five times during the 24-hour retreat. Each group was chaired by two co-facilitators, coming also from different traditions. Each seminary had a quota. About 70 people had registered for the retreat. In addition to the seminaries represented in the planning committee, a group of Catholic women from the Los Angeles archdiocese also participated in the InterSem retreat.

The Holocaust Workshop

At the end of a long day, the Holocaust workshop met in the lounge of a separate building. Jennifer opened the workshop. Amnon told about an encounter he had with his plumber. The plumber, an observant Jew from Hungary, had survived four concentration and death camps, and since that time, he has been searching for an answer to the question,

"Where was God in Auschwitz?" Until this day, he still has not received an answer. With Amnon's contribution, the theodicy issue was brought to the table.

I shared a few encounters from my journey in the USA, encounters which made me aware of the perpetrator heritage inherent in my German identity and how its relational dimensions lead to a continuous internal wrestling. I also presented information on Germany's recent relationship to the Holocaust past. For example, National Socialism was a mandatory subject in school education, but we were not taught how to relate to Jewish people; also, we scarcely ever meet Jewish people in Germany, and for a long time, women were not considered as perpetrators.

Then the conversation was opened to everyone. Participants asked questions or added their perspectives on related issues. Some reported on encounters they had with the Holocaust. Around midnight most people left, but a few stayed to discuss their specific interest in feminist perspectives on the topic, especially the challenge of weaving together the victim and perpetrator roles.

Analysis

In analyzing the workshop, the following observations can be identified: In total, approximately 20 persons participated in this workshop. There were only four males (three Protestants and one Jew, Amnon, who was one of the presenters). The women came from all faith traditions: five Jews, 2-3 Catholic women, and eight Protestant women (from both Fuller and Claremont).

One emphasis of the group conversation focused on the theodicy question, debating about why God did not intervene, and whether God had died in Auschwitz. One student from Taiwan was going through great emotional pain, which intensified the discussion as he shared his personal suffering and his desperate questioning about why God did not intervene. Another student from Cambodia alluded to her traumatic memories stemming from the Cambodian genocide. Some weeks before the retreat, she had visited

the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles where she saw a documentary clip that showed Pol Pot declaring that he had a clear conscience. Gin was deeply offended by Pol Pot's statement, since her mother's family had been almost completely eradicated in the course of the civil war. She herself remembers atrocities; they are still a disturbing her emotional life and reappear in nightmares. She offered her current perspective on where God might be present today. She felt that my daring to ask the hard questions was a sign of hope, and she said, "Maybe God is in this [in the questioning]."

Another emphasis revolved around the situation in Germany. Lucky Altman and Janet Sternfeld Davis (NCCJ representatives) wanted to know my perspective, and they shared encounters they themselves had in Germany. For instance, Janet was with a group of young Germans and Israelis. A young German challenged Israel's treatment of Palestinians. The perception of being verbally attacked by a German made the Israelis feel quite uncomfortable. Janet pointed out that each community had learned a lesson from the Holocaust, but the lessons are very different. Israelis might think, "Don't trust anyone anymore"; on the other hand, Germans might insist "Don't treat minorities unjustly."

A third theme emerged and dealt with questioning the responsibility of others in the Holocaust, expanding the discussion beyond Germany. Two women (Catholic and Protestant) mentioned examples wherein Americans failed to take responsibility, when they sent an immigrant ship back to Europe and did not take in Jewish refugees, even though they could have "taken in millions without even noticing them."

A fourth theme arose concerning our own courage to speak out and our readiness to take risks. Lucky Altman recalled the reunion of a Jewish survivor and a German father who had hidden the Jew and thus saved his life; doing this, the German father had risked the lives of his own children. The newspaper quoted the survivor, admitting that he himself doubted if he would have risked the lives of his children to save someone. Lucky Altman pointed to the question whether we would be willing to take a serious risk.

Interpretation

In interpreting InterSem, the focus will be on the Holocaust workshop. Usually the ratio of men to women in the planning committee was two to one. At the workshop this ratio was exactly reversed: out of 20 participants, only four were male. Besides Amnon, no Jewish man and no Catholic men attended the workshop. Why? Did my feminist stance have the effect of attracting some women and repelling some men? This was not confirmed. Rather, Janet Davis Sternfeld explained the particular situation of the Catholic men, who preferred to leave at the end of the official program. She also shared that many Jews today do not want to be defined by the Holocaust anymore. During the 1980s, Jewish libraries were completely filled with literature on the Holocaust. Now, at the end of the 1990s, people contend that Holocaust cannot be the central theme in Jewish education. If Jews are the only ones to tell about the Holocaust, such responsibility would seem to be a tremendous burden. Other Jews had mentioned to Janet Davis Sternfeld that they did not feel comfortable having this topic at InterSem because they seemed to be tired of dealing with that topic again and again. Does this new Jewish identity precipitate a more difficult situation for building connections -- or will it help to pave a path with fewer obstacles?

Remarkably, no Jewish person referred to suffering in her/his own family related to the Holocaust. Janet interpreted that phenomenon as a possible reaction to my owning the victimizer heritage. Krondorfer describes a principle at work in both communities in the following words: "The stronger the German rejection of the role of victimizer, the stronger the Jewish assertion of their victimization."³ Possibly the reverse dynamic might be true in our situation.

Open dialogue was supported by pre-established rules and attitudes for positive conversation; these were the basis of the entire retreat. Sitting in a circle, which provides

³Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 27.

the opportunity to face one another, is also important. This circle can help people listen more deeply; it can also make people more aware when listening is not taking place. For example, the person who spoke after Daniel shared his pain was sitting on the floor in front of him, but she did not turn to him; she made her contribution to the presenters. That body language seemed to others as if she might be, in actuality, neglecting his pain.

By listening to the pain of those whose suffering is not acknowledged, I realized how immensely important it is for survivors to have their pain acknowledged, and their unjust and cruel treatment recognized. Janet pointed out that survivors' emotional life can be "distorted" by their painful experience. The observation of distorted life among the Holocaust victims was analyzed by Primo Levi. He deconstructed the term "warped" as a false label for Holocaust survivors' medical deviance. Recalling a torture when his arms painfully were bent backwards for hours, Levi rejects this label for describing victims' state afterwards. He rather advocates to utilize the term "warped" for those who tortured him and many others. Regarding prospective educational tasks, the experience of "warped" needs to be further reviewed and a different view developed for consideration in religious educational practices.

To me, the comment "maybe God is in your courage to ask the hard questions" was one of the most powerful comments made. The Cambodian genocide survivor interpreted others' wearisome work of confronting the perpetrator heritage as giving her hope in her pain.

The risky "adventure" of group interaction was made possible through people who were willing to be open, who were interested, and who supported the whole endeavor. Janet Sternfeld Davis worded it like this, "Amnon came to support you and to be himself." His readiness was tangible in various telephone calls. Tuesday night after the retreat, Amnon expressed regret that the time constraints of the workshop did not allow discussion to dwell on the historical situation and the long centuries of Christian hatred. He was

concerned that participants failed to understand that the Holocaust did not happen in a historical vacuum.

Besides Amnon's clear interests, the majority of participants in the Holocaust workshop were women. Is it easier for women to approach tasks of reconciliation?⁴ During lunch break, two rabbinical female students, shared how they feel that women would more easily connect with efforts at reconciliation. One indicated that she feels more commonality with Orthodox women, but not with Orthodox men. The other recalled that in Israel, there exists a Jewish-Palestinian women's dialogue, but no male counterpart. In the United States, there are women's prayer groups across denominational fences, but not so among men.

Conclusions

Formulating potential conclusions requires identifying major issues which need to be developed further at the end of this chapter:

- * Facing and acknowledging the pain of victims by descendants of perpetrators is crucial for healing on both sides and the possibility of dialogue.
- * God's presence might be found in the courage to pursue hard and uncomfortable questions.
- * Offering a forum for open dialogue seems also to offer a forum to express contemporary suffering.
- * The specific options of women to work for reconciliation can be explored in greater depth.
- * People can be encouraged to connect with existing dialogue groups.
- * Information in and of itself, does not provide the only departure point for openness in dialogue; rather a significant beginning point is relational engagement and authenticity.

⁴Do women and men work in different ways on reconciliation?

Strength might be seen in the courage to be vulnerable without becoming defensive nor engaging in self-pity as a "representative" of perpetrator descendants.

* The actual dialogue partners may be different from what we expect. For example, contemporary Jews do not fit the clichés we were raised with in Germany. For instance I was surprised about Amy's question whether people in Germany are reclaiming their Jewish heritage; or experiencing feminism as a bridge to Jewish women; or learning about the fatigue among Jews to engage the Holocaust topic. The challenge is to develop a constructive curiosity which extends beyond clichés.

Reflections on Redefining Difference

Having analyzed one particular case, the purpose of this section is to draw upon existing theories of difference. In particular, we will identify aspects of difference which can help build connections rather than encumber connections. First, Audre Lorde, eminent author and scholar, and the Stone Center team of feminist scholars will be consulted to address the intertwining of racial and gender differences as experienced by women and ethnic minorities. Second, Zygmunt Bauman's philosophical considerations will be used to provide an ethical foundation for understanding the other in a post-structuralist and post-Holocaust era. Third, Björn Krondorfer's reflections will be considered to illuminate the particular historical situation which shapes differences between Jewish and German communities.

Feminist thinking is particularly crucial for understanding how women learn to think about themselves. Audre Lorde is one of the strong African-American and lesbian voices who has relentlessly worked on dismantling "the master's tools" of oppression.⁵ In her essay collection Sister Outsider, she traces the distorted concept of difference back to

⁵Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools will never Dismantle the Master's House," in Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press, 1984), 110-13.

oppressive structures in a capitalist society. Against that background, she favors a concept of difference which can serve as a springboard for creative changes. She writes:

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have *all* been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing . . . we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion . . . we do not develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives. We speak not of human difference, but of human deviance.⁶

This concern of Lorde's frames the concern of this section for redefining difference. She suggests using difference as the departure point for creative changes rather than allowing differences to separate communities.

How can deviance be redefined as positive difference and transformed into a springboard for creative changes? On the basis of what ethical foundation can this transformation be accomplished? In response to the first question, the Stone Center project will be introduced and considered. In response to the second question, Zygmunt Bauman will be consulted.

Difference as a Springboard to Creativity and Growth

This section explores how deviance can be redefined as positive difference and, thus, can serve as a springboard for creative changes. Three scholars related with the Stone Center participated in a project called "Building Connection through Diversity."⁷ They describe and reflect on their process of building relationships among themselves as three women coming from very different ethnic, geographical, historical backgrounds.

⁶Ibid., 114.

⁷Cynthia Garcia Coll, Robin Cook-Nobles, and Janet L. Surrey, "Building Connection through Diversity," in Women's Growth in Diversity. More Writings from the Stone Center, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 176-98.

They intentionally worked to "establish a deeper understanding of the ways in which our diverse backgrounds have shaped our world-views, our attitudes toward ourselves and others, our needs, and our ways of connecting."⁸ Cynthia Garcia Coll came from Puerto Rico, the culturally and racially mixed island society, Robin Cook-Nobles grew up in the segregated South of the USA. Janet L. Surrey's background is that of a Jewish, middle-class community member. During their journey toward connection, they entered a process of facing similarities as well as differences. Nevertheless, they entered into what they described as a "deeper connection." Acknowledging miscommunications, misconceptions, and biases, they also encountered unexpected commonalities in the strenuous work. Reflecting on their journey, Cynthia Garcia Coll perceives a movement from the personal to the political. She also corrects the some common assumption "that when women acknowledge their differences, the solidarity among them will be lost"; she recognizes this as a misconception.⁹

Cynthia Garcia Coll acknowledges "collective history" as a major obstacle which impedes the current situation. She recognizes that, "even if two individuals are interacting and struggling for mutuality, the prior and current historical relationships between the two groups get in the way."¹⁰ What steps can be taken to overcome such impasses? Cynthia Garcia Coll suggests that we "own our collective histories as well as our personal experiences."¹¹ This requires the personal acceptance of emotional distress, such as anger or shame. A second step, she describes, is that "both persons have to be willing to take risks."¹²

⁸Ibid., 176.

⁹Ibid., 177.

¹⁰Ibid., 179.

¹¹Ibid., 180.

¹²Ibid., 181.

Robin Cook-Nobles names the expression of anger and guilt as two further steps toward honest mutual relationship in the midst of diverse people. Some years earlier, Katie Cannon and Carter Heyward explored the challenge of anger in their mixed racial dialogue. Katie had asked Carter if she might be able to hold Katie's anger as a personal and a collective anger from other African American women. Katie Cannon and Carter Heyward concluded, as did Cook-Nobles, that anger has to be allowed and held if relationship is to grow and move beyond historical impasses.

Robin Cook-Nobles refers to dimensions of guilt that white women might experience in interracial interaction. First, they might feel guilty because Blacks are not only disadvantaged, but they, as white women, are privileged, which they are usually not taught to see. White women have to learn to see their privileges and acknowledge their share of involvement in racism; they need to take ownership of their own racism since unchallenged racism leads to a continuation of the status quo.

Janet Surrey ponders methods of working through impasses; she identifies commitment and persistence as being decisive for building cross-connections. She is convinced that, despite potential impasses, the struggle for mutuality can teach us to "rechannel the power of the forces that divide us into energy for connection and change."¹³ The vision for my work also, is to rechannel dividing forces into relationship-building energies.

Drawing from the Stone Center women's reflections on women's growth in accepting difference, the following challenges emerge for women who want to build connections — despite and through differences. First, women need to claim their collective histories and personal experiences, as Cynthia Garcia Coll described it. Second, they need to take risks in boundary-crossing interactions. Third, they face a task which is a

¹³Coll, Cook-Nobles, and Surrey, 194.

prerequisite to both challenges; they need to be willing to do emotional work, such as dealing with anger and guilt.

Difference in Establishing Moral Liability

If difference can contribute to creativity and growth, how might it transform ethical thinking and action? To explore ethical foundations in a poststructuralist and post-Holocaust era, I will draw from Zygmunt Bauman, a post-structuralist thinker who radically questions the accomplishments of modernist thinking, apparent in his book title Modernity and the Holocaust.¹⁴ Taking seriously the unfathomable shattering of Auschwitz for traditional (modernist) concepts of morality, Bauman is building on Levinas, who contends:

[T]he irreducible and ultimate experience of relationship appears to me in fact to be elsewhere: not in synthesis, but in the face of humans But it must be understood that morality comes not as a second layer, above an abstract reflection on the totality and its dangers; morality has an independent and preliminary range. First philosophy is an ethics The interpersonal relationship is not a matter of thinking the ego and the other together, but to be facing. The true union or true togetherness is not the togetherness of synthesis, but a togetherness of face to face.¹⁵

Through the ability, or the choice, to transcend being, the moral self comes into its own. Alluding to Levinas, Bauman formulates the necessity to live with others "face to face," thereby to reject the "iron grip" of being. In the framework of ontology, the other did not necessarily have a voice. The other's voice could be ignored and neglected.

What is the meaning of encountering the other *face to face*?

Bauman distinguishes that kind of encounter from the more familiar encounter, *as person*. Person connotes the Latin meaning of *persona*, referring to the antique theater where

¹⁴Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1989.

¹⁵Emmanuel Levinas, Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburg: Dusquesne University Press, 1985), 77.

persona signified the creation of a specific role whereby the role first had to be described and prescribed in the play. Levinas instead conceived *face* as nakedness: "The absolute nakedness of a face, the absolutely defenseless face, without covering, clothing or mask, is what opposes my power over it, my violence, and opposes it in an absolute way" ¹⁶

Bauman interprets encountering the other in its nakedness as meeting a face which invites me to respond morally: "I am fully and truly *for* the Other, since it is I who give her the right to command, make the weak strong, make the silent speak, make the non-being into being through offering it the right to command me." ¹⁷ Bauman emphasizes a kind of responsibility which is not stipulated by a contract assigning obligations. Rather, it is a kind of responsibility which is unconditional, which constitutes, at the same time, the other as the Face and oneself as the moral self. For Bauman, it is quite obvious that "morality is the *absolute beginning*." ¹⁸ He thereby offers an understanding of responsibility which is highly creative in regard to the other and in regard to one's own self:

Responsibility conjures up the Face I face, but it also creates me as moral self. Taking responsibility as if I were already responsible is an act of creation of the moral space, which cannot be plotted elsewhere or otherwise. This responsibility which is taken "as if it was already there" is the only foundation morality can have. A frail foundation, one must admit. ¹⁹

Bauman belongs to the leading theorists of postmodernity who reflect on social theory. He writes in a context where post-structuralists explain ethics as deconstructing identity through difference. Many assume that this would lead to a new era of "anything

¹⁶ "The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas by Tamara Wright, Peter Hayes and Alison Ainley", trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamara Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London: Routledge, 1988), 169.

¹⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 74 (italics Bauman).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 74 (italics Bauman).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

goes" and a dismissal of any moral responsibility. In contrast, Bauman opposes these trends by calling for a postmodern ethics that acknowledges moral responsibility by piercing through the thick veil of modernist assumptions down to the common moral condition. Bauman understands humans as foundationally ambivalent and acknowledges that most moral decisions have to be made in the context of ambivalence and contradictory impulses. In postmodern times, "morality is incurably *aporetic*."²⁰ Therefore, he calls on the moral self to face that inherent and incurable ambivalence, which modernism is still thought to reconcile. For Bauman, moral responsibility in postmodern context means "being *for* the Other before one can be *with* the Other,"²¹ and he understands this as the first reality of the moral self. In this view, difference can be an impetus for ethics, rather than an impediment.

Difference in Light of Historical Schism

Besides difference as a springboard for creativity and change and difference in establishing moral liability, a third direction of redefining difference will be considered: difference in light of historical schism. Historical schisms are frequently caused by traumatic ruptures between victims and victimizers. Katharina von Kellenbach named a decisive difference between victims and perpetrators: "Oppressors have the privilege of choosing whether to notice or to ignore suffering. It is the privilege of choice which distinguishes perpetrators from victims."²²

Usually this kind of difference is neglected, even if it can empower members of the perpetrator community to face and undo patterns of oppression. In regard to the

²⁰Ibid., 11 (italics Bauman).

²¹Ibid., 13 (italics Bauman).

²²von Kellenbach, 4. In a conversation on August 13, 1999, Janet Sternfeld Davis pondered that among American Jews and descendants of the victim community, they also have to make a decision to face the oppression and pain of their forefathers and foremothers.

perpetrator and victim communities of the Holocaust, the historical distance has precipitated peculiar patterns in trying to come to terms with that heritage. Björn Krondorfer identifies aspects of differences in the various discourses occurring in Jewish and in German community. He observes:

Differences in the discourse and ethos of Jews and Germans show up not only in political speeches but also in the emotional reactions of individuals. Only by careful listening to the particular experience of individuals can we discern distinct cultural ways of mapping these experiences. If similar rhetorical phrases or emotional and behavioral response recur among different people in separate situations, patterns larger than individual idiosyncrasies are at work. At the same time, some individuals resist dominant discursive practices. People have always demonstrated that they are capable of breaking away from the public and static rhetoric of their communities. This freedom to "break away" is what allows reconciliation to occur.²³

According to Krondorfer, specific communal patterns characterize the Jewish and German community in their respective responses to the Holocaust. These differences, first of all, need to be acknowledged before dialogue can be approached. Today the differences between Jews and Germans are strongly impacted by the way former experiences were mapped, and are still visible in communal discourse and ethos. At the same time, individuals can develop the ability to break away and to stand apart from their community's discourse and thus foster connection by differentiating themselves to a certain degree from their community of origin. The Leipzig theologian Martin Hüneburg points out that questioning one's identity only occurs if one's relational framework (*Bezugssystem*) is questioned in the process of encountering the other. People who continue to live in a fixed framework will not be challenged to investigate their identity from a new angle.²⁴

²³Krondorfer, *Remembrance and Reconciliation*, 12.

²⁴ Hans-Christoph Gossmann, "Der christlich-islamische Dialog und seine friedens- und identitätsstiftende Funktion" (The Christian-Muslim dialogue and its peace fostering and identity fostering function), *Junge Kirche* 60, no.1 (Jan. 1999): 18.

Drawing from her extensive expertise in Jewish-Christian relations, Janet Sternfeld Davis pointed to an additional challenge in interfaith dialogue: People not need "to break

Krondorfer suggests a dual approach which affirms the historical dichotomy between victims/victimizer, but also dares to question an inscriptive and prescriptive reading of the victim/victimizer roles which keeps Jewish-German relations caught in a stasis and hinders honest dialogue between the second and third generations.²⁵ On the one hand, building connection requires that people hold on to the historical dichotomy between victims and victimizer. On the other hand, the need to search for connection pushes people to move beyond this division. Holding the tension means acknowledging the abyss, but also working towards building bridges in the face of a separating past.

Educational Challenges for Building Connections

We move now from analysis to educational possibilities. This concluding section addresses educational possibilities for building connections in light of redefined differences. These conclusions weave together insights from the case study and theoretical reflections, identifying contemporary educational challenges, such as entering dialogue, acquiring historical awareness, and engaging in emotional work.

The first challenge is dialogue. The introduction to "Attitudes and Skills for Interfaith Dialogue" (NCCJ) states: "True dialogue is rooted in two fundamental values: respect for the human person and trust in the process of dialogue." Respect for the human person is mirrored in a particular way when descendants of the perpetrator community face and acknowledge the pain and suffering of victims. If they dare to embrace the other, they will mature in their own identity. People like Bauman and Folkert Doedens actually assume that identity only emerges through dialogue with the other. Doedens says, "Identity emerges out of dialogue with the other; and in encountering the stranger, one's own

away" from their community, but also need to maintain some connection to their community's framework in order to be trusted and keeping the opportunity to report back to their faith community on the progress of interfaith dialogue.

²⁵Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation, 46.

potentialities evolve."²⁶ Furthermore, as the InterSem workshop made visible, offering space for open dialogue also offers space to share and reflect on contemporary suffering. That kind of risky "adventure" was made possible through people who were willing to be open, who were interested in connection with the other, and who supported the whole endeavor. Carol Lakey Hess elaborates on this phenomenon as decentering: "Empathetic self-emptying is particularly appropriate when those in power encounter oppressed or marginalized persons. It involves the active choice of 'decentering' and perhaps even becoming a stranger to oneself."²⁷ With a similar emphasis, Darrell Fasching challenges Christian theologians to decenter themselves in relating to Jews. Fasching imagines that decentering requires an initial move of alienation from one's Christian perspective as "an attempt to critique one's own tradition by imaginatively experiencing it through the eyes of the other who stands outside one's tradition, as if one were the other who has been, or will be, affected by it."²⁸

Such dialogue is critical, but not a final end in itself. One critical note on existing dialogue groups is expressed by Dorothee Rogge -- that this kind of dialogue matters only if it has an impact on the way humans are living together.²⁹ What kind of group dynamic should thus be fostered? The sharing of information, in and of itself, does not provide the best departure point for dialogue. Rather, dialogue is precipitated through growing of

²⁶Folkert Doedens, "Thesen zum Interreligiösen Lernen - wider den Vorwurf der neutralisierenden Religionenkunde" (Thesis on on interreligious learning: against the accusation that teaching religion would have a neutralizing result), *Feuervogel* no.2 (1996): 7.

²⁷Carol Lakey Hess, 97.

²⁸Fasching, 5.

²⁹ Dorothee Rogge, "Der Dialog zwischen den christlichen Kirchen und dem Islam" (The dialogue between the Christian churches and Islam), in *Weltreligionen und christlicher Glaube. Beiträge zum interreligiösen Dialog*, eds. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, Joachim Rogge, and Gottfried Schille (Berlin: Wichern Verlag, 1993), 87-102.

relationships and through authentic sharing with one another. Women of the Stone Center project advocated commitment and perseverance.

In addition to dialogue, historical awareness is crucial to give a frame of reference and a more inclusive perception of the victim- and victimizer-reality. Cynthia Garcia Coll from the Stone Center project and Amnon Friedman from Case Study point to the importance of learning about history as a way to perceive the underside of a story. Storytelling can have a crucial function in getting to the underside of fragmented histories and family stories. The power of narratives are often neglected, however. Mirjam, a non-Jewish German woman in Björn Krondorfer's 1991 exchange program, ponders the lack of storytelling in her family. She writes in her essay:

The session on family histories, to which we were asked in advance to bring photos and memorabilia, became an embarrassing moment for us Germans. . . . Apparently we Germans did not take this task seriously, and I became aware of the level on which we had hitherto dealt with the Holocaust When I returned to Germany, I immediately began to research my own family history. I realized that my father had been waiting for just such an opportunity, and we had long talks. They were painful for both of us; and yet we were both relieved.³⁰

A story differential seems to exist between those who survived the Holocaust (and their descendants), and those who were bystanders, onlookers or even active participants (and their descendants). Is it conceivable that, for further dialogue, German women have to uncover their own stories, and claim them after a painful process of facing the truth? It seems obvious that German women need to learn to claim their own stories. Perhaps, women like Lore Walb can serve as role models.

One final educational challenge can be named. Willingness to carry out emotional work is necessary in the process of building connections despite differences. Regarding the inability of many Germans to relate to the Holocaust heritage, there is a

³⁰Appendix C.

serious relational task to be tackled with. It is no wonder that attempts to bridge the gap have involved heavy relational, and thus emotional, work. The following areas can be explored in such an effort: anger, deconstructing an unrealistic self image, and breaking down walls of defense and self-pity. The Stone Center project raises the question: Can German women encompass the anger of Jewish and other oppressed women?

Strength might actually be the courage to be vulnerable without becoming defensive nor engaging in self-pity as a "representative" of the perpetrator descendants. Mirjam perceived the challenge as "identity and vulnerability." Irene Wielpütz, a Jewish woman who returned with her family from Brazil, is convinced that moving beyond guilt feelings is critical. She says that, if people could do this,

they would all attend to their history, on both sides, including all that was so ugly; they would have to go through fear, rage, and sorrow, and they would then have to enter upon a new road to their own identity, regardless of whether they were German-Jewish, non-Jewish³¹

All of these people reflect the theoretical conclusions that much emotional work is needed. There is hope for educational projects. The InterSem program described in this chapter is one example. Reflecting on the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium by Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee,³² Shulamith Reich Elster recalls that

we learned *with* one another. By being drawn into relationship with one another through the educational process, we came to a new sense of our identity as religious persons. The "other" became a mirror in which I saw Judaism and my own life as a Jew in a more profound way.³³

³¹Wielpütz, 193.

³²See description in Chapter 1, 13.

³³Shulamith Reich Elster, "Learning with "the Other": New Perspectives on Distinctiveness," Religious Education 91, no. 4 (fall 1996): 570.

The Catholic-Jewish Colloquium illustrates how a joint learning process can deepen the awareness for one's own religious identity and, at the same time, foster appreciation for the other's identity.

In this chapter we explored the task of encountering "the other" as a joint endeavor. Reflecting on the InterSem case study and consulting Audre Lorde, Björn Krondorfer and the Stone Center research team helped to unearth complexities in current interactions. In the closing section, three educational challenges were identified: entering dialogue, acquiring historical awareness, and engaging in emotional work. The challenge now is to focus on practices; this is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

Religious Educational Practices

Auschwitz, the symbol of the Holocaust, embodies such an interruption in the moral history of humankind that it appears to be impossible to draw any educational lessons from that unique event. On the other hand, it is "immoral" not to ponder the pedagogical prompts coming from Auschwitz. The Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim coined the term "the commanding voice of Auschwitz."¹ He tried to integrate the historical revelatory quality of the Holocaust by interpreting it as "the commanding voice of Auschwitz," which demands that we not give Hitler a posthumous victory by falling into despair about God, or about other humans. Rather, we need to keep the memory of the victims alive. Religious education should take into account and offer response to the "command" of the *Shoah* in light of research in various fields and disciplines.

The purpose of this chapter is to envision a future approach to religious education that will enable second and third generation women in Germany to respond to the Holocaust in relation to their national, gender, and Christian identity. The necessity of facing the Holocaust has been addressed in various ways in previous chapters of this dissertation. Let me review the major themes dealt with thus far. Chapter 1 presents the problem of relating to the Holocaust fifty-five years after the event. Chapter 2 presents results of three research studies, revealing the experiences of people who are now living with this heritage. Chapter 3 introduces the public discourse on Holocaust in post-war Germany. Chapter 4 elaborates on the current psychological situation regarding the Holocaust heritage in light of five major published studies. Chapter 5 explores the

¹ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 84-91.

intersection of Holocaust studies and women's studies and its implications for women from the perpetrator community. Chapter 6 addresses issues emerging for Christians who seek to face the Holocaust. Chapter 7 investigates options for building connections despite a separating past. Finally, Chapter 8 is focused on practices of religious education which might contribute to learning among second and third generation women affiliated with the Protestant church. The proposed practices are likely applicable to other Christian churches as well, but the focus here is on the German Protestant church. The proposed practices are intended to empower and encourage people as they respond to dilemmas outlined in the previous chapters.

To my knowledge, religious educational practices in regard to the specific dilemma and pain of the Holocaust heritage have not yet been developed. Therefore, this is a journey to an unfamiliar land with few maps to guide the way. The structure of this chapter is three-fold: to identify interdisciplinary challenges, to recall insights from diverse educational methods, and to develop religious educational practices, or relational movements. The interdisciplinary discussion will place this thesis in relation to other academic fields, such as practical theology, women studies, and Holocaust studies. The educational methods discussion is informed by the three educational projects described in Chapter One. Finally, the identification of religious educational practices can lead into concrete projects and actions, embodying the spirit of "teaching by heart."

Interdisciplinary Challenges

The purpose of the following section is to locate this work at the intersection of practical theology, Holocaust studies, and women studies. For this reason, religious education as an art of practical theology, religious education related to feminist perspectives, and religious education with regard to Holocaust studies will be contemplated.

Practical Theology

In the United States, religious education is part of practical theology. Like practical theology in general, religious education bridges theory and practice, academia and church, wisdom from the tradition and orientation toward future generations. Both involve active conversation with various disciplines, especially with social sciences and other theological fields, such as systematic theology or the history of Christianity. For these reasons, religious education embodies a healthy tension between continuity and change, and between nurturing and questioning the status quo. Usually, religious education occurs in groups and communities; thus, it also creates a bridge between the individualistic tendency of Western strands of Christianity and the communal dimension of God's kingdom.

In "The Aims of Practical Theology," Mary Elizabeth Moore describes a variety of aims of practical theology in current US history, such as guiding the life of the church, uniting the arts of ministry, promoting the development of theology in relation to its social context, contributing to social analysis and critical public discourse, contributing to ethical behavior, contributing practical wisdom to theology, and contributing to social transformation.²

I want to locate the present endeavor in relation to "guiding the life of the church" and "contributing to social transformation." During the 1970s and early 1980s, people like Howard Grimes and John Deschner formulated an understanding of practical theology which was nurtured by a strong hope that the church might be transformed.

Relating this goal to the challenge of relating to our Holocaust heritage means: challenging church-affiliated women towards transformation. Hopefully, their journey will influence

² Mary Elizabeth Moore, "The Aims of Practical Theology: Diversity in the United States," paper presented in Université de Lausanne, July 1995; published as "La Théologie Pratique aux États-Unis: Une Diversité d'Options," Cahiers de L'Institut Romand de Pastorale, no. 24 (Mars 1996): 3-17.

their church's life and contribute to the transformation of society. I understand this thesis to be a contribution to religious education in its critical function, while, at the same time, drawing from the richness of its tradition.

Feminist Studies

Religious education scholars such as Maria Harris, Mary Elizabeth Moore, and Carol Lakey Hess embody how religious education and feminist perspectives can come together and shed new light on women's learning. Very carefully they listen to women's passions, yearnings and experiences. They unearth women's potential to contribute to change and reconciliation as relational work. They identify artistry, stories and hard dialogue (among others) as places where simultaneously learning, empowering of women and transformation can occur -- for women themselves and for the greater community.

Holocaust Studies

In May 1995, the Paderborn University hosted a pedagogical conference on "The Holocaust in Public Schools". Pedagogues and teachers from East- and West Germany, along with social scientists from Germany, Israel and other European countries, discussed educational concepts from past decades (i.e. focus on anti-fascism in the former GDR) which are no longer useful for a reunified country.³ The new challenge is how to develop educational concepts and methods which enable people to make the connection between this tragic past and the current postmodern society. These concepts have to respond to a common reluctance among students, "*Wir kennen das alles schon - uns reicht's damit*" (We already know all that - we are bored).⁴ In light of the previous chapters, I became aware that the religious educational situation for women is not yet sufficiently explored.

³In the European context, pedagogue is not a term of disapproval for a teacher who "gives too much attention to formal rules" as the Cambridge International Dictionary of English states, but rather a scholar whose primary field of interest is education.

⁴Bar-On, Brendler, and Hare, eds., Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln.

More research needs to be done in order to identify more clearly their specific needs. Based on my research, women of the second and third generation seemed to have acquired some distance to their school education. For them, new questions have emerged which are often related to educational responsibilities or social issues. Field study II reveals that very few women seem to be influenced by public discourse. Building on his interviews with the children of Nazi perpetrators, Dan Bar-On suggests the importance of "working through processes" that occur in a particular sequence. I believe that his ideas are useful for their educational potential. In Chapter One, I pointed out the need for women of the second and third generation to face the implications of their being both victim and victimizer in the Holocaust. In this section, I will use Bar-On's stages to suggest a way to move from step 1 -- "acquiring factual knowledge on the Holocaust" -- to step 2 -- "grasping the meaning of those facts" -- to step 3 -- "responding emotionally to facts and their meaning" -- to step 4 -- "building on that: developing an attitude toward the Holocaust."⁵ The purpose of my suggestions for the educational process is to suggest the kind of movements that will foster the working through process that Dan Bar-On is proposing.

Educational Methods

This section will draw from three distinctive educational projects already explored in Chapter 1: Björn Krondorfer's exchange programs for facing the Holocaust, the Catholic-Jewish Colloquia as an interreligious learning project, and the conflict mediation training by Christians Empowering for Reconciliation and Justice (CERJ). The purpose of recalling these projects is to name their diverse insights, which can inform the design of the relational movements proposed at the end of this chapter.

⁵Dan Bar-On, "Children of Perpetrators of the Holocaust: Working through One's Moral Self," *Psychiatry* no. 53 (1990): 229-45.

Each of these methods brings a particular insight of educational methodology to the table. Krondorfer demonstrated the importance of encountering the Holocaust through a biographical approach, which nurtures connection and identity. Boys and Lee explored the enormous value of long-term and informed gatherings, which foster interreligious understanding in the context of deepening relationships and commitments to learning. Finally, the conflict mediation model conveys a spirit of reconciliation through concrete mediation skills, applicable in many conflict situations and paving the way towards reconstruction of a torn community.

One further warning is needed to avoid unreasonable expectations regarding these educational approaches. That is the importance of "unlearning" destructive beliefs, values, and patterns of action, at the same time that people are learning new ways. Mary E. Hess admits that "we white people don't question what it is that's making us shy away from putting the unlearning of racism at the heart of our work."⁶ With that caution in mind, the three educational projects in this section suggest ways that German women could become inspired and encouraged to unlearn racism and to face their past.

Teaching from the Heart

In relation to Holocaust education, religious practices become very important. The hope is for people to grow toward reconciliation and more genuine and just ways of living together. Drawing from Practicing Our Faith, I understand religious educational practices as locations where new learning processes can be launched;⁷ at the same time, these practices can be experienced as interrelated threads which form a tapestry of life.

⁶ Mary E. Hess, "White Religious Educators and Unlearning Racism: Can We Find a Way?" Religious Education 93, no. 1 (winter 1998): 114-29.

⁷ Dorothy C. Bass, ed., Practicing Our Faith (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 1-12.

Religious education, as a relational endeavor, teaches people to form good relationships. In our context that means reconstructing broken relationships to the Holocaust past, to victims, to perpetrators, and to oneself as a descendant of such a heritage. I emphasize relationship, assuming that reconciliation and transformation cannot be directly pursued; rather they will emerge as people are willing to be vulnerable. The willingness to open oneself to vulnerability emerges from the center of a person. Biblical and poetic language uses the metaphor of the heart to refer to that center of passion and self.

But what does it mean to teach and learn from the heart in regard to Holocaust teaching? Parker Palmer describes two ways to see the world, depending on which eye we use:

Many of us live one-eyed lives. We rely largely on the eye of the mind to form our image of reality. But today more and more of us are opening the other eye, the eye of the heart, looking for realities to which the mind's eye is blind. Either eye alone is not enough. We need "wholesight," a vision of the world in which mind and heart unite . . . With the mind's eye we see a world of fact and reason. It is a cold and mechanical place, but we have built our lives there because it seemed predictable and safe . . . So we open the eye of the heart and see another sight: a world warmed and transformed by the power of love, a vision of community beyond the mind's capacity to see.⁸

Building on Parker Palmer's ways to see the world, teaching and learning from the heart means gearing towards "wholesightedness," and thereby seeing the world with love and envisioning communal life.

Drawing from Mary Elizabeth Moore's Teaching from the Heart, I want to highlight some aspects of teaching from the heart which seem to me also applicable to teaching and learning in relation to the Holocaust heritage. As a process theologian, Mary Elizabeth Moore assumes an organic worldview, which fosters a specific understanding

⁸Parker J. Palmer, To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), xi.

and way of learning. Three aspects stand out: "The world comes together in every moment of experience," "learning is a rhythmic process of discovery," and learning is fostered by "revering the ordinary."⁹ Each aspect may be illuminated by a vignette.

First, the world comes together in every moment of experience. In February 1999, during InterSem, when Amnon Friedman and I took the risk of engaging in a conversation on the Holocaust from a Jewish and German perspective, something amazing happened. Without any planning, the circle of pain and liability broadened, and responses from the audience went beyond Jewish-German relations. Participants shared their traumatic experiences from Taiwanese and Cambodian perspectives; two American women addressed the United States' lack of responsibility during the war. We all felt like the world came together in this moment of honest and vulnerable dialogue.

Second, learning is a rhythmic process of discovery. During the last four and a half years, I have been studying abroad and traveling between the United States and Germany. An alternating rhythm of distance and closeness, critical analysis and listening to the local situation, revealed to me challenging insights from both continents.

Third, learning is fostered by revering the ordinary. During the phase of writing the dissertation and urgently seeking models for relating between Germans and Jews, I became aware that, next door, people were already relating well on a weekly basis. My partner (German) had started to teach a Jewish woman (A) from Israel, who had to acquire German reading knowledge skills for her academic requirements. The Jewish woman actually hated the language, the country and the people because of the Holocaust past. How could this teaching relationship work? Both people were strong-minded women who were able to articulate their particular positions. They agreed to start working together and see if it was possible. It worked. After A's successful exam, they had a long conversation

⁹Moore, *Teaching from the Heart*, 210-20.

and debriefed regarding their working relationship. What they both brought to their working desk was, first of all, a respect for the other's position, however different their positions have been. From C's perspective, there had been a lot of insecurity about how to behave and how to deal with the situation. She was well aware of its fragility and of the responsibility she took in accepting the teaching relationship. Looking back on these sessions, she felt that the most important attitude had been to listen and not to defend her nation's past or her ancestors. As I reflect on this particular situation, I realize the importance of learning to revere the ordinary in teaching the person next door, in studying a troublesome language, and in striving for a workable and task oriented relationship.

In early Hebrew thinking, heart embraces reason, will, and emotions. The Western bifurcation into heart and mind is lacking the holistic concept of Hebrew thinking, where intellectual capacity is also located in the heart. This dissertation suggests an approach to Holocaust teaching as teaching from the heart, by which I mean the holistic notion of Hebrew thinking. It does not suggest at all a neglect of intellectual capacities. Rather, it embraces many dimensions, including what the mandatory public school teaching in Germany does accomplish through a primarily cognitive approach; it also includes what it fails to teach by ignoring other capacities.¹⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel is convinced that "to educate means to cultivate the soul, not only the mind. You cultivate the soul by cultivating empathy and reverence for others, by calling attention to the grandeur and mystery of all being, to the holy dimension of human existence, by teaching how to relate the common to the spiritual."¹¹

¹⁰In May 1995, pedagogues, teachers and social scientists from East and West Germany, from Israel and other European countries discussed educational concepts which make the connection between the tragic past and the current postmodern society. They are facing a common tiredness expressed by students *Wir kennen das alles schon - uns reicht's*. (We know all of that already - and we are fed up.)

¹¹Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Values of Jewish Education," Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly of America 26 (1962): 83-100.

Such a holistic approach to education can also pay attention to the shadow side and ambivalence of human existence. The New Testament shows, in particular, how fear and anxieties can occupy human hearts and paralyze and distort people's actions. Again and again, the gospels express encouragement, such as "take heart," "do not be frightened," "do not be afraid" (Matthew 28:5; Luke 2:10). Since the human heart, according to the biblical witness, can also harden, turn away, become like stone, the heart is crucial for processes of transformation in terms of its relating to the Divine and in relating to other humans and the whole creation.

The heart is important to shaping one's entire identity. Mary Elizabeth Moore says, "Within the heart, the character of a person is shaped, and within the heart, God is at work. God communicates with the heart, and religious experience and moral conduct are rooted there."¹² Therefore, in sum, teaching and learning from the heart in regard to Holocaust education suggests a search for holistic movements that embrace intellectual, emotional, relational, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Employing the metaphor of the heart assumes that this center of the human person can be transformed to participate in *tikkun olam*.

Religious Educational Practices as Relational Movements

This closing section presents the constructive contribution of my dissertation. I am responding to issues and concerns pulled out of the three research studies in Chapter 2 and the exploration of literature on identity formation among Germans, women, and Christians. At this point I am suggesting nine relational movements which go beyond the very theoretical discussion on Holocaust education and encourage people to get involved in an active process of participating in educational opportunities and learning to relate to the Holocaust heritage. These practices invite people to relate with other people and with

¹²Moore, Teaching from the Heart, 203.

history. This empathic approach, thus, will reshape one's relationship to the Holocaust heritage and one's identity as German, woman and Christian.

This section first presents introductory reflections on relationality in education, followed by an overview of the educational movements, and finally by the nine movements themselves.

Relationality in Education

Relationality in education is both, an ontological reality and an ideal, to which people are encouraged to strive for. The following section considers two categories of relationality: relational space and relational skills. These two categories help to frame the proposed nine relational movements as they help people respond to the *Shoah*. In suggesting relational movements for religious education, I hope to broaden existing approaches to Holocaust education in particular.

Relational Space

Relationality is embodied in relational space, or the educational environment. This includes the people themselves, the interactions, attitudes, educational processes and subject matter. Although the ground for education is always relational in the sense of embodying the whole of participants' heritage and present experience, the goal here is to create relational space in which people are aware of the power of their heritage and unique experience; further, they can explore, engage, and be transformed as they interact with one another and with realities and visions of the world. Claiming relational space — and perhaps creating new relational space — invites people to immerse themselves in difficult questions because they experience the environment as a safe space, allowing them to become more genuine and open for encountering the other. I am encouraging educators to broaden the present relational spaces in which they teach. Within broader spaces, learners will be able to cultivate skills of empathy that are now missing in their relationships, as I have shown in Field Studies I and II. How can educators create the space in which this

necessary change can happen? Three conditions for relational space will be addressed: (1) taking into account the existence of relational space, (2) providing an optimal level of cognitive dissonance, and (3) envisioning a non-hierarchical space.

First, in post-Holocaust education, people are already surrounded and shaped by relational space. The differences and dynamics between first, second, and third generations¹³ are expressions of this basic premise. Therefore, relational movements will be experienced and will precipitate different processes of learning and interaction depending on the kind of relational space which participants have experienced in the past and the kind they can learn from in the present.

Second, a certain level of cognitive dissonance can help people to acquire new insights, attitudes, or behavior in a situation in which they feel uncomfortable. So-called comfort zones can be expanded. As long as the educational environment is a safe place, a necessary requirement for learning, people do not need to shut down their willingness and openness to apprehend what is going on. The question of appropriate cognitive dissonance needs careful deliberation. Studies on Holocaust teaching have revealed that dissonance can be too much or too little.¹⁴ For example, some studies reveal that students inundated with pictures of corpses can not stand the painful experience they are exposed to; they became numb, defensive, or even bored.¹⁵

The third consideration suggests reshaping new relational space as a circle, putting aside the common social constructs of hierarchy, such as a ladder or pyramid. My hope is for educational processes that cultivate and protect space which helps people overcome

¹³Chapter 4 of this dissertation, 121-22.

¹⁴Authors such as Jack Williams Brehm, Leon Festinger, and Philip G. Zimbardo dealt more extensively with this topic.

¹⁵Gertrud Hardtmann in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, 110.

destructive separations caused by dichotomies (such as victim and victimizer) and by misperceptions, stereotypes, and other demeaning constructs.

Relational Skills

In addition to space, skills are also important. Relational skills are those abilities that allow people to engage in dialogue with oneself, with another person, and with communities. Relational skills empower people to permeate boundaries in themselves and around them.

Building on previous considerations of developmental theory and feminist concerns, we can see three kinds of relational skills that are particularly important in the context of post-Holocaust education. In Chapter 5, developmental theories were briefly considered, recognizing that only specific stages allow certain accomplishments and skills. Although these theories point to possibilities that emerge with maturity, the nine proposed movements do not require certain skills in advance; they can be developed along the way through one's involvement in the process. The relational skills proposed here are shaped, in part, by feminist values.

Inspired by Joan Chittister,¹⁶ the first skill is circular interaction, which encourages strength through shared power. People need the skills of sharing with, learning from, and building community with others. They need experiences of circular interaction in their immediate context and beyond. In addition, people need the relational skill of valuing the dignity of others. Internalized oppression is learned through interactions with others; people come to know who they are by means of what other people tell them they are. The concern here is for relational space that heals and transforms, and the skill of valuing the dignity of each participant is decisive for interrupting internalized messages of oppression. This is particularly important for women who are descendants of a perpetrator nation.

¹⁶Joan D. Chittister, Heart of Flesh. A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 59-109.

The third relational skill is the duo of perceiving and remembering; together these enable people to engage their present and past. Aristotle's search for a foundation of human action led him to study the lives of people. He came to understand time as filled with experiences. He named two key characteristics of engagement with experiences, namely the capacity to perceive and the capacity to remember.¹⁷ The capacity to perceive and the capacity to remember are considered as foundational relational skills for participating fully in the educational movements to which we now turn.

Overview of the Educational Movements

Recognizing the value of relational skills, we move now to consider nine educational movements that are important for Holocaust education. These movements represent pedagogical principles, which can guide further theorizing, as well as educational practice. The nine movements can be located between theory and practice (the common dyad in educational reflection) as didactic principles. The principles facilitate movement from practice to theory and from theory to practice; thus they represent a necessary link between theory and practice.

The dissertation necessarily ends with the principles. Further development and elaboration of a concrete and applicable curriculum needs collaboration with others who will be involved in Germany. I am setting forth directions that can only be developed concretely with women in Germany. I understand my suggestions as a starting-point for dialogue.

I want to name a few characteristics which are common to all of the movements. They are interwoven, interactive and broadly applicable. The movements are presented in

¹⁷Cited by Britta Jüngst, Auf der Seite des Todes das Leben: auf dem Weg zu einer christlich-feministischen Theologie nach der Shoah (On the death's side there is life: Towards a Christian-feminist theology after the Shoah) (Gütersloh, Germany: Christian Kaiser, 1996), 23.

linear order (due to language conventions), but the movements can actually come in any order and, also, simultaneously. They are an expression of the fabric of life. The movements are drawn from women's experiences and reflections, but they might be applicable to men who also cherish and trust relational experiences as healing energies.

The nine movements in overview are:

1. Entering new relational space.
2. Moving from painful exposure to listening.
3. Moving from silence which excludes the past to silence which acknowledges the unfathomable abyss of evil.
4. Moving from complacency to constructive unrest.
5. Acknowledging one's own pain but letting go of the victim's role.
6. Moving from individual pain to common mourning.
7. Moving from a spectator's distance to embracing responsibility for a perpetrator heritage.
8. Moving from encumbered communication to courageous dialogue.
9. Moving from being disturbed to getting involved.

Each movement will be introduced by a story, which I then explore and explain.

1. Entering new relational space

During my ecumenical studies in Dayton, Ohio, at United Theological Seminary, I recall my initial anxiety to sign up for a class in Jewish thought. A friend from Peru did not understand my reluctance to approach the professor, but encouraged me to talk directly to him. Finally, we approached him together and she introduced us, making it easier for me to address my concerns. Because of my newly awakened awareness of the Holocaust implications for Jewish-German relations, I worried that Dr. Friedman would feel uncomfortable with a German in his seminar. It was just the opposite. He was very welcoming. Since he had

knowledge of the German language, several times he helped out by translating a term which was not clear to me. This seminar was a space where I could explore the newer history of Jewish thought. It was also the place where I learned how the experience of pogroms deeply impacted Jewish family histories. Dr. Friedman shared the story of his great grand-aunt who was a survivor of a Russian pogrom and suffered madness each year when Lent was celebrated — because that had been the beginning of that horrible pogrom.

This story may illustrate the first movement of taking a risk in entering a new and sometimes scary, space. This was my very first encounter with a Jewish professor. An empathic relationship developed, which allowed me to listen carefully to Dr. Friedman's lectures and accounts. Some months later, that space was broadened even more when I accepted his invitation to talk to a Holocaust class from the perspective of a second generation German, together with a daughter of Jewish survivors.

2. Moving from painful exposure to listening

During a visit to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, a group of four German women were exposed to the rise and atrocities of National Socialism. In one room, they listened to a woman who had to observe little children being thrown out of a window, and among them was her own daughter. Seeing the violence, seeing it from the victims view, feeling their pain evoked pain among the German group. "I couldn't stop crying" one of the German women admitted later. — A little further down the exhibition tour, the group entered the gate of a displayed concentration-camp entrance. The guide quietly mentioned that she had been there, as a 13 year old girl. All those rooms and pictures were now connected to that woman's life. At the end of the tour, she was asking the greater group of visitors, mostly young girls: "Who was responsible and could it happen again? Do you know what is my revenge to the Germans . . . what is my

revenge to the Germans . . . what is my revenge? My grandchildren, they are my revenge. We will not allow Hitler a posthumous victory."

This story illuminates the movement from painful exposure to listening. The group of women allowed themselves to be exposed to the exhibition on German NS cruelties and the Holocaust in a Jewish museum in the United States. The shame of being German in facing the atrocities of one's nation was unavoidable, in particular doing that in the presence of survivors. Not only the guide, but also testimonies in film clips and in written documentation portrayed the voices of those who had suffered incredibly and whose thinking is still impacted by that endured pain. Imagining the pain (i.e. one's own infant is thrown out of the window) of the persecuted people stirred up emotions and pain among the German women and intensified the listening process immensely. The encounter with the guide and her experience provided something like a path which the group followed during the rest of the tour. Having connected with her and her fate made listening almost unavoidable.

3. Moving from silence which excludes the past to silence which acknowledges the unfathomable abyss of evil.

Karen (real name changed), a participant in Field Study I, reports a conversation on the Holocaust she had, as a high school student, with her grandparents. Her mother was shocked that she broke the taboo and inquired of her grandparents something which she [the mother] never had dared to do. "My grandma was born in 1918, my mother in 1943. . . My grandma did not want to talk about it, she reacted like she was being tortured and wished that we would continue to be silent. My grandpa urgently wanted to know what the teacher had told us. . . Eventually my grandma wanted also to say something. Her version went like this: 'Loyalty towards the authorities was a given, they did not have a clue about politics, they completely lacked information, women did not deal with politics at

all and also women were not allowed to say anything. That would have been just the men's job. She just fought to survive.' In the second part of the conversation, Karen's grandmother said that they (herself, grandpa, her whole generation) burdened themselves with serious guilt, and for her it felt impossible to ponder that [guilt] in later times and to admit how much evil emerged out of that. She wished it would have been different. ¹⁸

Karen's grandma illustrates how hard it is to move from silence that excludes the past to silence that acknowledges the evil. Her granddaughter's inquiry finally lured her into the confession, "We burdened ourselves with serious guilt" Unfortunately, at the end of that conversation, Karen's grandma returned to her defense patterns, insisting that women were powerless at that time. Karen had to work through various and contradicting messages, which she received from family members. Bar-On found out in his interviews that

children who tried to penetrate their parents' silence have first had to be aware that there were gaps or distortions in their parents' accounts; then they have had to identify the motives behind these versions of the past, confront them, and find a way to work through to the untold story. ¹⁹

The effort of children to penetrate silence and face the truths they uncover reveals the challenge of this third educational movement.

How can an educational process be fostered that allows someone to move from silence to silence? Old people might feel like Karen's grandma. Young people, inundated with images of the Holocaust, cannot claim the past as their own but reject it as past history. What does it take to acknowledge one's embeddedness in a cultural inheritance which produced bystanders, accomplices, perpetrators, and victims - and only a small number of active resistance members?

¹⁸Appendix A, Q1. This complete quote is in the original letter.

¹⁹Bar-On, *Legacy of Silence*, 329.

Decades ago, Adorno suggested that Holocaust education first of all has to educate the educators. This is necessary to ensure that their attempts to enlighten the public would not awaken a stubborn resistance, which would actually foster the opposite. Teachers who focus almost exclusively on transmitting historical knowledge have neglected the moral dimension. They have failed to cultivate in themselves and their students a movement from silence. They have neglected the moral liability to a silence that acknowledges the unfathomable abyss of evil.

4. Moving from complacency to constructive disturbance

As a young girl, Lore Walb was fascinated by the Führer and the slogans of the NS party. From 1933 to 1945 she shares her feelings and thoughts in her diaries. Her journey testifies what was going on in her head and heart similar to millions of other Germans. At the end of the 1980s, she again reads those diary entries written 50 years earlier. She discovers the blindness of the young Lore Walb. Devastated, the old Lore Walb asks herself: Why did I, as a bright student, take in the fascist propaganda? Why did I keep being a bystander until the very last months of the war? How could I overlook the fate of the Jews and the suffering of those countries who were attacked by the Wehrmacht (German military)? The old Lore Walb enters a deep crisis. Relentlessly, and with the supportive conversations of political psychologists, she is searching for the whole truth in her life of that time. She goes through several phases of physical sickness - and experiences them as part of the healing process. "To remember requires radical honesty toward oneself and readiness to learn. That process requires readiness to allow emotion, to become aware and to admit them. Mind-work is not enough . . .

To remember causes pain. The work of remembrance - mentally heavy work - needs time. The soul cannot be pushed."²⁰

Lore Walb was willing to face her own ignorance. During the painful process of identifying gaps in her diaries, she listened more and more to the side of those who were oppressed, excluded, and finally annihilated. She dismantled her youthful enthusiasm of that time and found that she had erected it as a shield to cover her role as a bystander and, thus, her complicity in the deportation of millions -- which she finally remembered, including her own friend from elementary school.

Sara Lee and Mary Boys have pointed to the importance of informed encounters in their Catholic-Jewish dialogue project.²¹ In our context: broadening one's historical knowledge, learning about women's complicity in regard to National Socialism, offers a different perspective on women's roles and their responsibility. Acknowledging women's ambivalent role during the Third Reich and later in post-war Germany, the experience of "second guilt" must lead to a constructive unrest. The concept of caring is unsettling if it excludes "the other."

A discernment process is required, in particular for women: How am I involved in oppressive systems? Whose tasks am I fulfilling? Which tasks should I claim as my own? Women must dare to ask new and unsettling questions. Family systems theory and feminist theory might shed some light in our effort to understand the function women are fulfilling in a specific community. Furthermore, gaining understanding in regard to the different generations and their dynamics can reveal one's own position in that dynamic and encourage women to allow constructive disturbance.

²⁰Walb, 25-26.

²¹Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, "The Catholic-Jewish Colloquium: An Experiment in Interreligious Learning," Religious Education 91, no. 4 (fall 1996): 420-66.

5. Acknowledging one's own pain but letting go the victim's role

Anne (name changed), a participant in Field Study I, wrote: "I understand myself as a handicapped lesbian. I felt it in my own body how painful it is to be ostracized. . . I am aware that during the Third Reich homosexuals and lesbians were incarcerated; also handicapped people were incarcerated and killed. Today I do not worry for myself. I worry about current endangered groups such as asylum seekers who are deported through the government. I want to be alert that activities and speeches coming out of racism and fanaticism may be stopped. "

Anne felt in her own body the pain of being marginalized, namely as a lesbian and a person with disabilities. She acknowledges her pain without letting herself be stuck in the victim's role. Rather she wants to reach out to those who are in danger.

Acknowledging one's own pain requires us to deal with those areas which bend us over, as happened with the "bent over woman" discussed in Chapter Six. Feminist analysis provides tools to recognize oppressive situations and to identify power differentials in victim-victimizer situations. To explore traps of self-sacrifice in which women are tempted to maintain such a role may be one way to question precisely those patterns, for example to care primarily for others and to neglect themselves.

Another pain needs to be addressed in this context of rethinking one's practices as a woman and Christian in light of the Holocaust, namely, the pain of feeling homeless in one's religious home, agonizing over the depth and range of contamination found in Christianity. Rather than lock up this pain and stick with the traditional church or leave the faith community all together, women are to be encouraged to acknowledge their longing for a genuine and energy-giving spiritual community and to continue searching for partners in renewal.

6. Moving from individual pain to joint and communal mourning

Irene Wielpütz had returned from her family's exile in Brazil during the 1950s. She is now living in Germany again as a social worker. In her essay "The Difficulty of Speaking the Unspeakable," she shares an encounter she once had with one of her clients:

*"And there we sit, she, the child of a "Nazi collaborator," and I a "Jewish child." And laughing and crying, we acknowledge that we have to contend with the same behavior in our parents, namely with the repression, the denial, the "I-don't-remember-anymore" on the one side, and the "I-don't- want- to- hear- about- it- anymore" on the other; with the unlived mourning, with the unlived rage, with the unlived fear. And we don't know where to go with it all."*²²

I hesitate to comment on this powerful statement. How can women from the perpetrator community become engaged in this kind of communal mourning? South African feminist theologian Denise Ackermann suggests that crying out for healing and public lament is a feminist theological response to the mothers, wives, and relatives of victims. Jewish feminist theologian Rachel Adler ponders "pouring out your heart like water" by suggesting that a feminist Holocaust theology is "best grounded in lament."²³

Insights from previous chapters reveal that mourning cannot be forced. Maria Harris describes a dance movement that flows from silence as listening to remembering to mourning, artistry and birthing.²⁴ According to Harris, these movements can be expressed in communal rituals. Since 1958, "Aktion Sühnezeichen" developed communal rituals as programs, by inviting German youth to journey from activity to involvement to gaining

²²Wielpütz, 177.

²³Presentation at the AAR/SBL conference in November 1998 in Orlando, Florida.

²⁴Maria Harris, Women and Teaching (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 17-91.

historical knowledge to building relationship to remembering the Holocaust. Undertaking this personal journey will enable them to offer social service with much greater sensitivity to their national past and its implications for those they serve.

In the context of Jewish mourning and remembering, Irving Greenberg suggested a ritual of remembering the pain in the concentration-camps and ghettos by gathering around the potato peelings of Bergen-Belsen and putrefied bread of Auschwitz. Is it imaginable that descendants of the perpetrator nation are also sitting in this gathering, holding the tension of feeling the pain of those who perished and - at the same time- feeling the shame of belonging to those who caused that suffering?

7. Moving from a spectator's distance to embracing responsibility for perpetrator heritage

During the exchange program in 1991 between young American Jews and Germans, the participants were invited to spend the Sabbath in a Jewish family. Torsten felt welcomed in his host family. Then the grandma started to share her story from Lithuania, where she had to observe how a German soldier murdered her baby brutally in front of her eyes. Torsten writes: "As I remembered that my own grandfather, as a German soldier, had been in Lithuania during this time, I was shocked about my personal ties to the Shoah and to the host family. In this moment I fully realized why I had participated in this exchange program, and I fully understood the meaning of the "third guilt." This is the guilt of the third post-war generation of Germans: putting so little effort into trying to understand the Shoah . . . "25

²⁵Torsten Kratz, "Impact of the Holocaust on Children of Survivors: A German Perspective," The Third Generation after the Shoah. Between Remembering, Repressing and Commemoration. Attempts of a Common Time in Philadelphia, Berlin, Auschwitz: American, German, Jewish and Christian Student Exchange Program, July 25 - August 22, 1991, eds. Staffa and Krondorfer, 36-7.

Suddenly, a far distance came very close. This exchange student was pushed out of any spectator perspective. Certainly he was discovering connections that he had not realized before. What position would he take in light of what he had just learned?

Claude Lanzman's documentary film *Shoah* reveals glimmers of how the deportation of Jewish people was organized through the German *Reichsbahn* (railway company). Lanzmann persistently focused on the detail when he was interviewing bystanders, survivors, and perpetrators. Through his brilliant interview technique he could retrieve specific information which people thought was forgotten; it was still there. The deadly bureaucracy had divided responsibility and had separated into pieces the murderous tasks by forming sub units of responsibility. Thousands were able to participate in the bureaucracy of death without actually feeling responsibility for it. In "Profile of a Pedagogy after Auschwitz," Schreier points out that "responsibility" lost its meaning during the Third Reich.²⁶ Dividing the responsibility into pieces precipitated also the ability to divide the immediacy of remembrance. Through this procedure, the catastrophe itself remained awkwardly abstract in many memories. A spectator identity had been cultivated.

The challenge of revising the spectator identity and reconnecting the whole situational picture persists today. Reclaiming the meaning of "responsibility" is to be understood not as a liability for what grandparents did in the past, but as taking responsibility for its implications for the future.

²⁶Helmut Schreier, "Konturen einer Pädagogik nach Auschwitz" (Designs of an education after Auschwitz), in *Das Echo des Holocaust: Pädagogische Aspekte des Erinnerns*, eds. Helmut Schreier and Matthias Heyl (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. R. Krämer, 1992).

8. Moving from encumbered communication patterns to courageous dialogue

Miriam Gläser recalls the following situation from the first evening of the exchange program between young American Jews and Germans in Philadelphia:

*"The session on family histories, to which we were asked in advance to bring photos and memorabilia, became an embarrassing moment for us Germans. While the Americans came with loads of photos, we could only provide a few and cheap excuses for the apparent gap in our histories between 1933 and 1945 . . . When I returned to Germany [after the exchange program] , I immediately began to research my own family history. I realized that my father had been waiting for just such an opportunity and we had long talks. They were painful for both of us; and yet we were relieved."*²⁷

Abroad and in comparison with their American Jewish peers, Miriam discovered gaps in her historical recollections. These were the result of encumbered communication between her generation and her parents' and grandparents' generations. Commanded silence among the first generation was accompanied by the prohibition to ask. Encounters with survivors and her Jewish peers enabled Miriam to interrupt that cycle and to approach her father upon her return.

Chapter 3 pointed to the impasse of the current public discourse, and Chapter 4 unearthed encumbered communication patterns in the private realm. Therefore, it becomes crucial to determine what other paths of communication can be opened.

²⁷Miriam Gläser, "Facing the Holocaust as a West German," The Third Generation after the Shoah. Between Remembering, Repressing and Commemoration. Attempts of a Common Time in Philadelphia, Berlin, Auschwitz: American, German, Jewish and Christian Student Exchange Program, July 25 - August 22, 1991, eds. Staffa and Krondorfer, 66. See also Appendix C.

Drawing from Sandra B. Lubarsky's essay on Dialogue: "Holy Insecurity",²⁸ she highlights aspects of dialogue, seen from a process theological perspective. Lubarsky lifts up dialogue as a process of meaning making. Victor Frankl, an Austrian psychotherapist and survivor of the Holocaust, who developed the psychoanalytical school of logotherapy, assumes that the "will to meaning" is basic to the human psyche, and encountering the other is an essential part of that journey to human wholeness.²⁹ Carol Lakey Hess coined the notion of "hard dialogue and deep connections," addressing the strenuous work and the deepness of that kind of communication which is nurtured by the power of relationship building. All three of these theorists suggest that dialogue requires courage, but has the power to transcend encumbered communication and difficult relationships.

9. Moving from being disturbed to getting involved in tikkun olam

Once, a younger Jewish teacher told Lore Walb that the Holocaust heritage "is a luggage she has to carry with decency."³⁰

Susanne, a participant of the 1995 exchange program, expresses a similar sentiment. She ponders the metaphor of "planning my life" in light of post-*Shoah* responsibility:

. . . I become pregnant. Uncertain, inexperienced, but happily I will live through pregnancy. . . The child demands my attention and will be a life's task . . . [At the exchange program] I am faced with thoughts and feelings that I did not know before - and I realize: I have a responsibility. The responsibility challenges us all but also specifically me. It demands a place in my life. Once it has made itself known, it will not disappear. Inevitably I must cope with it; it cannot be brushed

²⁸Sandra B. Lubarsky, "Dialogue: 'Holy Insecurity,'" Religious Education 91, no. 4 (fall 1996): 540-546.

²⁹Joseph B. Fabry, The Pursuit of Meaning. Logotherapy Applied to Life (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 33-54.

³⁰Walb, 20.

*aside and I cannot rethink my decision. I now want to have this 'child.' The education and growth of ideas born this way are completely in my hands; so are its development and consequences. If one day I have fully raised these ideas, the past will not stop living in my present, and I never stop to face my responsibility."*³¹

Susanne, as the young Jewish teacher who talked with Lore Walb, was aware of how events in one's life or the life of a human community can move persons to be involved in the core of the world. Such involvement points toward the Jewish vision of *tikkun olam*, or repair of the world.

This movement toward *tikkun olam* teaches people to live with ongoing implications for the future. South African peacemakers recognized that resistance during apartheid was actually easier than working for reconstruction. For them, reconstruction involved active work, even while living with the ongoing impact of their apartheid heritage. In reconstruction, one is called to move beyond either/or, enemy/friend. Now the task is to come to terms with shadows of the past in a lifelong journey of *tikkun olam*. Learning to live with these shadows means learning to welcome ambivalence and to persevere in holding tensions. It means, in particular, learning to relate to members of the "other" side.

³¹Susanne Roszbach, "Lebensplanung," Living in a Post-Shoah World: Reflections of American, German, Jewish and Christian Students, 3rd Summerprogram on the Holocaust, July 21 - August 19, 1993, eds. Staffa, Krondorfer and Jurgovsky, 66.

CHAPTER 9

Keeping in Mind and Keeping in Heart

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize those findings of my research which seem to me most important for prospective work in religious education as a reconciling and practical discipline responding to the *Shoah*. Then I will identify areas of fruitful future research suggested by the dissertation.

Summary of Important Findings

This section first will uplift crucial findings from the three field studies described in Chapter 2. Building on insights from Chapters 7 and 8, "learning at the intersection of private/public space" will be explored as a decisive location where the theoretical explorations from Chapter 4, 5, and 6 can be applied.

Findings in Field Studies I, II, and III

Important findings from field studies I, II, and III will be sorted according to three questions: First, what are persuasive ways to motivate people to open themselves and face the Holocaust? Second, what moments of transformation seemed to influence identity formation? Third, what are prospective challenges for religious educators?

First, what are persuasive ways to motivate people to open themselves and face the Holocaust? In Field Study I, three prominent ways to engage in the Holocaust topic were identified; namely participating with others in teaching situations, experiencing and reflecting on emotions, and making connections with other historical situations which were relevant for the interviewees. Field Study II unearthed the importance of a mentor who suggests visiting a memorial site, and the support of a peer group to do it as a joint enterprise. Field Study III pointed to various conditions of a holistic learning environment such as: applying and making a commitment to a traveling program, being exposed to the

victims' perspective, and traveling with peers who embody the victim and perpetrator heritage.

Second, what moments of transformation seemed to influence identity formation? Field Study III identified various moments of transformation as factors in reshaping identity. Especially important were the moments of glimpsing the victims' and perpetrators' perspectives, connecting one's life and one's family history with the Holocaust past, and gaining new understanding about one's home country through learning to see through Jewish eyes. Uncovering one's own ignorance helped to locate oneself in history with a particular heritage. Approaching perpetrator feelings became a means to learn more about one's own destructive possibilities.

Third, what are prospective challenges for religious educators? Findings from Field Study I indicate that 45.5% of the interviewees never had a (conscious) encounter with a survivor or a descendant. Only three or four women were significantly connected to a survivor or descendant. How can the lack of relational opportunities be bridged? Many encounters occurred abroad. The question emerges: how can radical encounters in new contexts be included in religious educational practices in Germany? Findings from Field Study II question the effectiveness of single visits to a memorial site. Emotional experience in itself does not seem sufficient to raise questions regarding one's identity in a still --too-- familiar context, such as one's home country. In contrast, Field Study III identified moments of transformation as taking place within a comprehensive and complex texture of learning, characterized by three main components: being involved during a specific period of time, being exposed to encounters with "the other" in the context of a very dynamic group process, and having left one's familiar place and entered a new relational space.

These findings from the three field studies point to prospective challenges for religious education. Additional relational opportunities need to be found and enhanced in the educational process. Teaching relational skills requires a holistic texture of learning

going beyond the experience of single visits. Also, educational experiences need to integrate components of long-term commitment in a context of encountering "the other" by leaving one's familiar place.

Learning at the Intersection of Private/Public Space

Acknowledging the current impasse of public discourse in Germany (Chapter 3), this dissertation articulated the need for entering new relational space and moving beyond the limitations of political discourse by finding new ways to engage the Nazi past in a fluctuating rhythm between public and private space. Even though public and private space are often distinguished, the long-term goal of relational learning is to overcome any lingering dichotomy. Teaching at the intersection of public and private space can occur. Consider the following "Kindergarten Case."

Elisabeth was an interviewee (Field Study I) who works in a kindergarten as a trained educator. She reported on her experience of introducing 6 year-old children to a children's book on the Holocaust.¹ Elisabeth had asked each mother in advance for permission to address that topic in the kindergarten. Each parent responded with a personal reaction, and all were supportive of Elisabeth's plan. One woman started to cry and shared a trauma from her family background she had stored for many years. Since Elisabeth had already dealt with the Holocaust topic for some time, she could build on her learning process and withstand the immediate impulse to share her own family story. In listening, she was attentive to the unexpected emotional reactions of these mothers. The next day, sitting in the familiar circle, she read from the children's book and showed the pictures, children's drawings from Theresienstadt. The children listened attentively,

¹Judith Kerstenberg, Als Eure Grosseltern jung waren: mit Kindern über den Holocaust sprechen (When your grandparents were young: Talking with children on the Holocaust) (Hamburg: Krämer, 1993).

supported by their awareness of the current air raids on Serbia at that time and their concern for the fate of children from Kosovo. The children made their own observations and raised questions, such as: "But Hitler himself was not blond - how could he make such a law?" Or "Were all the guards women?"² The children's book concludes with a present-day playground showing German, Turkish, Jewish, and children of color playing together. Elisabeth asked them if they knew a child from another country, like those in the children's book. It took them a while, but they eventually recognized that there was actually a Turkish girl in their group, though she was absent that day. The following day, Elisabeth invited the children to reiterate the book for their Turkish friend. In their reiterating the story, it became clear that the children had understood the details and the story line. In follow up conversations with the parents, the children did not reveal any upsetting reactions. It had been a "normal" story, important to learn about; it was removed from the common taboo zone.

This example reveals how learning processes in private space and public space can occur simultaneously. They actually can stimulate one another. Elisabeth as an educator had a public role; her own personal work on issues in private space had prepared her for that role; she engaged individual mothers at the intersection of private (family) and public (kindergarten class). The women responded personally, but supported public education with their reaction. At the same time, internal conversations among the involved actors (parents, children, and educator) were going on, thereby connecting to knowledge they had all received from both private and public discourse.

This case shows how a teacher with a public vocation and mothers with a private vocation can interact and, thus, foster both private and public learning for themselves and

²Assumedly the drawings conveyed the impression (regarding their portrayed size and maybe their clothes) that the guards resembled women.

their children. Subsequent steps could move towards a group conversation among the parents and probing further the influence of private to public space.

This case also can serve as an encouraging story. Stories can be utilized as means to bridge private and public space, private and public discourse. Stories can help people imagine other people's lives. There is value in utilizing stories for acquiring relational skills.³ Stories have the capacity to address complex issues by embracing the human soul, body and reason. Stories are able to bridge and can communicate cross-cultural differences, thereby conveying truth that cannot be expressed directly.

Findings from Chapter 4 and 5 point to the importance of moving beyond subliminal and foggy communication and daring to ask questions. German people need to listen to Jewish voices. This listening includes the willingness to face unfathomable evil. Requirements for building up a critical identity include: self-construction, holding tension with ambivalence, and overcoming a fragmented history. Women are facing women's complicity in the *Shoah*, leading to a necessary reshaping of women's identity and, also, recognition of ambivalence in women's roles. Christians face additional challenges in wrestling with the ambiguity of one's faith tradition and a deeply ambiguous experience of the Divine.

Fruitful Future Research

This section addresses several areas of fruitful future research. Since the theoretical distinction between public and private space has framed this work, exploring specifically the intersection of private learning (through relations in familiar and smaller settings) and public learning (through institutions and larger social networks) could be an area of further research. The kindergarten case described earlier offers a rich example of how private and

³Moore, Teaching from the Heart, 131-62.

public learning can be fostered. Further practice and research could uncover other possibilities.

This dissertation suggests that learning to welcome ambivalence presents one of the implications of the Holocaust -- welcoming ambivalence in one's relationship to the Divine, to oneself and to other people. Ambivalence contains both constructive and destructive directions. Future research might unravel how, in a learning process, constructive tendencies can be fostered and destructive directions restrained.

The discussion on women's moral development was evoked by Carol Gilligan's and her colleagues' research. We do not have comparable research regarding women's ethical decisions during the Third Reich. After 25 years of women's studies and Holocaust studies, we should have sufficient information to analyze women's roles and involvement in various areas during the Third Reich. Further research could be done regarding women's moral decisions and the implicit theoretical concepts that guided them then and explain them now. A related question is what kind of teaching allows women to move toward "prophetic caring" as suggested in Chapter 5?

This work considers relational learning as an appropriate response to the Holocaust and perpetrator heritage of German women. Further research needs to be done as to how this can be incorporated into already existing religious educational curriculum in churches and adult education, since they often focus more on cognitive learning. Furthermore, a bridge needs to be built to feminist groups outside of academia who gained self-confidence through reclaiming their power. The time is overdue to recognize that reclaiming one's power requires also acknowledging one's share of responsibility in the perpetrator heritage.

The interweaving of victim and victimizer heritage (Chapter 5 and partially Chapter 6) could also be analyzed more deeply, as people build on the insights and proposals of this dissertation. A colleague working on women's abuse issues, pointed out that women's traumatic experiences require healing of their overwhelming feeling of helplessness and the

strong feeling of separation from other people. Pushing too early towards acknowledging the perpetrator heritage can interrupt and destroy the healing process. This dissertation paid more attention to the perpetrator heritage than to the victim heritage for reasons that were important. In light of the unfathomable suffering of Jewish and other victim groups during the Third Reich, it seemed (morally) difficult to dwell on German victims' heritage. Future research, however, could analyze the interplay more fully, attending to women's traumas as an important element in women's learning to take responsibility for the perpetrator heritage.

In this dissertation, I am clearly writing from a west-German perspective. A few participants of Field Study I and III expanded the west-German experiences. Most published research, however, does not take explicitly into account east-German perspectives regarding the Holocaust heritage; their unique perspective needs special attention in future research.

Keeping in Mind, Keeping in Heart

The two preceding sections addressed topics "to keep in mind." This closing section recalls the constructive work of Chapter 8, the nine relational movements that constitute a religious educational response to the *Shoah*. "Keeping in mind . . ." those movements encourages second and third generation German women to respond: to enter new relational space, to move from painful exposure to listening, to move from silence which excludes the past to silence which acknowledges the unfathomable abyss of evil, to move from complacency to constructive unrest, to acknowledge their own pain and let go of the victim's role, to move from individual pain to common mourning, to move from a spectator's distance to embracing responsibility for a perpetrator heritage, to move from encumbered communication to courageous dialogue, and to move from being disturbed to getting involved in *tikkun olam*. These movements are an invitation to learn with one's

heart and thus to foster a path towards reconciliation between the former victim and perpetrator communities.

APPENDIX A

FIELD STUDY I: RESEARCH ON IDENTITY FORMATION

"HOLOCAUST UND KIRCHENFRAUEN DER 2. & 3. GENERATION - eine Spurensuche"¹

In May 1998 I sent or gave the following eight questions to about 25 friends, former colleagues in youth ministry, and other graduates from the same educational institution Karlshöhe. Thirty-three women responded to the questionnaire, more than I had sent out. Most of the women knew through letters and conversations that I had been dealing with the Holocaust topic because of earlier conversations. This relational dimension might have been a reason why they responded at all, responded on time and wrote quite openly and in detail. On the other hand, only two women attended an additional rap group that I offered in support of the questionnaire.

DESCRIPTION of the women who responded:

Professional vocation: (people made multiple choices)

diaconal ministers: 9

socialworker: 7

educators and pedagogians: 7

currently 'family woman': 5

physician and nurses: 4

pastors: 4

secretary: 1

unknown: 1

32 women are working in social fields, 20 women are employed by church related agencies or institutions.

Age:

The age ranged from 55 years (born in 1943) to 24 years (born in 1974). Average age lies at 36 years (birthyear 1962). Most women were born between 1957 and 1964 (21 women), whereas 3 were older and 8 were younger. I am not able to distinguish who belongs to the second or third generation.

Church affiliation: (people made multiple choices)

employed as a church professional: 13

involved as a volunteer: 9

critical observer: 9

¹Transl.: Holocaust and church affiliated women of the second and third generation
- a search for traces.

no longer church affiliated: 1

At least 14 women have a formal theological education.

The following description sections (1.1., 2.1, 3.1, - 8.1.) list all statements in English translation, to be found under the respective questions. Quotation marks indicate where I translated the direct quote; otherwise it is more like a summary of the respective statement, but very close to their wording.

Following are the eight questions, which were printed on two pages with space in between to write the answer under each question. Several women enclosed additional pages of reflection to the questionnaire.

- 1. Can you recall places-situations-encounters where you were touched or troubled by the Holocaust?** (Kannst Du Dich an Orte- Situationen - Begegnungen erinnern, in denen Du mit dem Holocaust in Berührung kamst oder aufgestört wurdest?)
- 2. Reflecting on your family's and your own history - can you identify delicate spots in regard to the Holocaust?** (Wenn Du Deine eigene Familien- und Lebensgeschichte überdenkst, kannst Du heikle Bereiche im Blick auf den Holocaust ausmachen?)
- 3. What intrigued you to deal with the heritage of the Holocaust?** (Was hat Dich bewogen, Dich mit den Folgen des Holocausts zu beschäftigen?)
- 4. Did you ever have personal encounters with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors?** (Hattest Du jemals Begegnungen mit jüdischen Menschen oder Nachkommen von anderen Überlebenden?)
- 5. As a woman - are there specific concerns you would like to highlight?** (Gibt es bestimmte Anliegen, die Du als Frau hervorheben möchtest?)
- 6. As a Christian - do you see a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust?** (Siehst Du als Christin eine besondere Notwendigkeit sich mit dem Holocaust zu beschäftigen?)
- 7. As a German - (how) does your national identity matter in regard to the Holocaust?** (Inwiefern) Ist Deine deutsche Identität wichtig im Blick auf den Holocaust?
- 8. If you see yourself as a lesbian - in which way does that possibly have an impact on approaching the Holocaust topic?** (Wenn Du Dich als lesbische Frau verstehst - wie beeinflusst das (möglicherweise) Deinen Zugang zum Holocaust Thema?)

Each question will be presented here in three steps:

1. Description
2. Analysis
3. Interpretation

The closing section "Conclusions" of Appendix A will address questions and problems having emerged out of Field Study I.

Question 1: Can you recall places-situations-encounters where you were touched or troubled by the Holocaust?

1.1. DESCRIPTION

In wording the question, I had provided the keywords "place, situation, encounter"; the interviewees referred to the following locations where they were touched or troubled by

the Holocaust past. I have organized their responses according to memorial site, school education, movies, encounter abroad, visit to Israel, personal encounter, and intellectual contexts. The figures in brackets indicate how often this place or situation was named.

Visiting a Memorial Site (34 times, not necessarily all the women and some visited more than once)

Former concentration-camp (16)

such as Dachau near Munich, Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, Mauthausen in Austria, Sachsenhausen, Auschwitz in Poland, Buchenwald in former GDR, Bergen-Belsen

Organized as a high school excursion (4)

to Dachau, Buchenwald, Theresienstadt

Anne-Frank-house in Amsterdam (3)

Jewish cemeteries (3)

Former synagogue (2)

Former execution site Berlin -Plötzensee (1)

Holocaust memorial in Budapest (1)

Jewish museum Frankfurt (1)

Several women recalled buildings/locations close to where they grew up:

Church building (gathering rooms) which had been a former synagogue (1)

Memorial site (remembering mentally ill people exterminated through the euthanasia program) (1)

Site at the border between Austria and Slovenia (view of a former concentration-camp, branch of Mauthausen) (1)

Formal School Education (about 28 women referred to school experiences)

Meaningful class in "history" was recalled by 11 women

High school excursion to a former concentration-camp (see above)

Exchange program to Israel (1)

One recalled that every year Holocaust was taught and each year she responded with increasing anger

One recalled that in school she encountered the first pictures with mountains of corpses

Movies left a strong impact (6)

One woman was raised in former GDR - she recalled that school assignments required them to inquire of their grandparents about events during WWII

Several mentioned Anne Frank's diary (reading, watching the movie, attending a theater performance)

Watching Movies

Watching movies in school, at cinemas or TV was named by 19 women.

Encounters Abroad (named by 6)

Encounters in Holland (2)

Bolivia - during a one-year-internship: meeting Germans with NS worldview

Kenya - on the street she was admonished as a German because of Hitler

Scotland - during 4 months stay again and again having been addressed in regard to the Holocaust and whether it is taught in German schools

Den Haag - During a choir tourney, the Den Hag school principle lectured to the 12 year old students on Edith Stein that they should feel very ashamed about the Nazi past

Visiting Israel (named by 10)

Yad Vashem played a specific role; 6 named it specifically.

One woman was struck by the documents: "I could read the original. Such things were written in my language."

Personal Encounters (named by 6)

Encounter with a nurse whose parents perished in Theresienstadt, lifelong friendship develops.

Intern in a youth group was greeted with "*Sieg Heil*" (which means literally "victory salvation," -- the enforced greeting during the Third Reich). She initiates an educational program and later invites a survivor who was taken to a concentration-camp at an age similar to the members of the group.

Continuous education seminar with State Rabbi Berger, ongoing dialogue with his wife, excursion to France

One woman shared that only recently her friend learnt of her father's being Jewish
Grandfather participated in the SS

Grandparents and parents' generations told about times during the Nazi domination

Intellectual Contexts (17)

Many women read books, biographies, diaries (12)

One woman wrote a thesis on theodicy

One woman selected the "Holocaust" for her oral exam

Kirchentag, (lecture)

Seminar with the State Rabbi

Lecture by a survivor

1.2. ANALYSIS

Numerical overview according to highest scores:

- Visiting a memorial site: 34x; visiting specifically a former concentration camp: 20x
- Formal school education: 28 women (out of 33 women)
- Watching movies: 19
- What I called "intellectual approach" such as books, lectures etc: 17x
- Encounter abroad: 16, specifically Israel: 10, Yad Vashem: 6
- Personal encounters: 6

Those locations seem to embody symbols where women connected with the past. The scores suggest that visiting a memorial site, in particular a former concentration camp, presents a very common acknowledged symbol of dealing with the past (34, or with the

addition of Yad Vashem, 40) . "Personal encounters" range lowest (6), three reflect the victim perspective, three relate to the perpetrator heritage. My wording did not favor one specific perspective; therefore it is quite remarkable that only three responses refer to the victim side. Also, in question 2, only twice was a reference made to the victim side (Jewish and communist relative).

1.3. INTERPRETATION

The data suggest that those women had been touched and troubled at locations which focused on the victims' suffering. (Memorial sites, movies, books and probably the later history classes). Regarding school education, it is not clear whether the teacher was able to teach 'relational skills' or rather favored the cognitive approach or ended up precipitating emotionally disturbing experiences.²

Nevertheless, school education stands also for an intellectual approach, and if we compute those scores, we end up with 45 in total, the highest of all. In contrast, only 6 times were "personal encounters" named. In question 4, 15 women never had a personal encounter with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors. There is a huge lack of relational experiences per se. How are they supposed to acquire relational skills?

2. Reflecting on your family's and your own history, can you identify delicate spots in regard to the Holocaust?

2.1. DESCRIPTION

In listing the responses, I assigned them to the person who was primarily addressed, such as mother, father, grandparents, and oneself.

Any Sensitive Issue (10 responses)

- "Even by asking I do not know anything."
- "In the family history the topic did not/almost did not come up for discussion. We talked a lot about the war, but not explicitly about the Holocaust."
- "Well, not." (*Eigentlich nicht*)
- Rather a taboo, respective "nothing was known."
- At home one did not talk very much about the war. "One did not know what happened." Only in recent years, they talked about a socialist relative who immigrated and who helped Jews to cross the border.[even about positive things they were silent!]
- "No."
- No, I don't. My father did not participate in the war, he was too young. I do not know very much about my grandfathers, they had passed away already when I got interested.

²Gertrud Hardtmann presents material which manifests the inability of many teachers to relate to the students' emotional precondition. See chapter 3 "Search for an Undamaged Identity."

- For parents and grandparents that was never a topic. WWII and its implications for parents and grandparents was more often talked about.
- "No"
- There was little dealing with it, lack of knowledge about those former events, but nevertheless there was a hunch [during the time] that Jews were deported to the concentration camps.

Mother

- In school we dealt with that "topic" and I shared that at home. My mother had experienced the war as a near adult. I then learned that it was not successful (*ergiebig*) to talk about. She did not say concretely that she did not want to talk about it, but I felt it anyway (*aber gespürt hab ich es schon*). Recently my mother told me that they had Jewish neighbors who disappeared suddenly, she assumes they were denounced. Today she asks herself if she couldn't have done something.
- I have talked with my mother. She was open to the topic, ... but kept specific prejudices (i.e. Jews are rich, recognizable because of their nose etc.) She showed me a family certificate which indicates that we are an "Aryan" family.
- Sometimes my mother used to talk in a derogatory way about Jews.
- Telling her grandparents about the history class, her mother was shocked: "She never would have dared to ask her parents about that"; it was an absolute taboo which was met with dead silence and repressed. Only her aunt told her mother something about that time.

Father

- "It's a pity that I could not ask my father. He died when I was 8 years old. He was an officer during the war. I suspect that he knew much more. I suspect that my mother knows that."
- My father called himself distinctively a Nazi ... he insisted on the Auschwitz-lie.
- My father continues to hate Jews and is convinced that it was OK what happened during the Third Reich (at least the Jewish pogroms).
- The question I addressed to my father in particular (born 1924) was why apparently the German population did not know anything.... But I could talk with him somehow.

My Family (Parents)

- My family(Austria) does not like to talk about that topic. Once I heard that my grandfather had joined the SS, but nothing concrete is known. I know only that my grandfather was soon badly injured in Russia. After the war he was in a British camp for one year. ...All information results from my combination of scattered conversation; no open discussion or information.
- They never talked about the family history during the NS and I feel also it is hard to inquire about it.
- My grandfather and my parents talked frequently about the war and after-war memories. The Holocaust was never brought up.

One's Own history

- In school the topic irritated me increasingly. Again and again came this topic - I felt it was terrible what had happened, but I did not discover my own connection to it. In Israel, I again encountered the cruelty, and when people reported their own stories it haunted me even more. "But I am not more touched by these stories than learning about war situations."
- Three encounters with right wing students who denied the Holocaust.
- "Once my aunt overreacted when I wore a new black leather jacket. Later she explained that female warders wore them in KZ. ...Several times I tried to wear it but I did not feel comfortable in it."
- Once (5th or 6th grade) I complained to my mother that in school the topic "Jews" was dealt with in three classes. She pointed out the importance of the topic. Until then I had not heard the term Holocaust.
- "I only recall that I did not like to deal with the Holocaust as a student. I was supposed to learn something important at a wrong time."
- Studies in Jerusalem: own dealing with guilt
- Key experience during my theological studies: I had great difficulties with the Old Testament until someone asked if I was blocked by a latent hatred against Jews... I was able to accept this statement and faced the fact that I had not worked through my NS heritage. My Old Testament blockade dissappeared, the subject became quite easy for me.

Grandparents

- My grandpa held a high SA position (and was killed during the Russian campaign 1944), but my grandma could not be brought to comment on his activities.
- "No, only in anti-Semitic remarks of my grandmother."
- In school we often got the assignment to ask our grandparents in regard to events of WWII. It felt awkward to say to them "You should have known about the concentration camps..?" Both of my grandfathers killed people. I do not know whom. Never it was talked about.
- In my presence they never talked about the involvement of uncles or grandparents in the war (i.e. one grand-uncle had joined the SS); taboo. Relatives born between 1910 and 1920 and from my father's lineage, side remarks still reject Jewish people. From my mother's lineage: a remote relative was a Jew and attorney in Berlin who committed suicide. His son had to flee, I believe. A great grandfather was communist and was persecuted....Almost never talked about, because of taboo in regard to shame and lack of self-esteem in this family.
- Telling about the history class, her grandmother did not want to talk about it. In contrast, her grandfather wanted to know what the teacher told her...He listed positive accomplishments of Hitler.... He was not aware that the Jews should be killed, only during the war he learned about concentration camps, only after the war they learned about the Holocaust. ... Then, her grandmother also wanted to add something: "Women were not involved in politics, total lack of information, and women did not have anything to say regarding politics. That was only men's

concern (*Männersache*). She fought only for survival...Later, her grandmother stated that her whole generation was guilty of that time. She couldn't stand to think about it later and to admit what devastation emerged out of that time. She wished it would have been different..., but she maintained that women were completely powerless and that her opinion did not count...(which was contradicted by her daughter who said that she was actually a strong and educated woman, more than the daughter herself.)

- Grandfather had joined the SS, which was no topic for a long time and was never addressed in regard to the Holocaust.
- My grandmother is war widow.... Her husband "died for the fatherland," which gave her partial comfort.
- Grandparents (mother's lineage) rejected Hitler and his machinations, disliked Jews because of economic experiences. (Author does not know whether these were their own experiences or propaganda). She does not know the position of her other grandparents (father's lineage). She experienced her grandmother as "nonpolitical."
- My grandfathers were quiet, unobtrusive fellow travelers, my grandmothers declared themselves to be ignorant and anxious.
- Role of grandparents - perpetrator?

2.2. ANALYSIS

This analysis will identify themes, name emotional dimensions expressed in the statements and will refer to moments of transformation among members of the first generation. According to Mary Elizabeth Moore's method, I will search for keywords, activities and symbols, in order to filter out **themes** which were addressed in those responses.

Themes

- * war, post-war experiences
- * prejudices, disliking Jews, anti-Semitic remarks
- * not knowing, knowing little
- * asking, inquiring, not addressing a question
- * talking, not talking
- * telling, sharing
- * called himself a Nazi, they were denounced
- * lie, denial

Emotional Dimension

I felt it anyway (that she did not like to talk about it), felt the awkwardness [in the air] when I said "You should have known..."

Mom was shocked [that I dared to ask my grandparents]...

I regret that I cannot ask my father..

...hard to inquire...taboo.

Increasingly annoying topic

Ongoing shame and lack of self-esteem in the family (communist relative who had been persecuted)

Grandmother was reluctant to respond - grandfather was curious and wanted to know what the teacher...

Disliking Jews

Moments of Transformation

My understanding of moments of transformation relates to situations in which people of the first generation revealed some level of discomfort with the past - and searched for a meaningful interpretation in order to live with it:

*After years of not talking, one mother provides additional information - and is ready to question herself: "Today she is asking herself if she couldn't have done something."

*After initial reluctance to talk, a grandmother admits feelings of guilt: "Later, grandmother said...that her whole generation was guilty of that time...later she couldn't stand to think about it...but she maintained that women were powerless."

*Grandmother was a war-widow. That the husband "died for the fatherland," gave her some comfort.

2.3. INTERPRETATION

Themes

These themes indicate a major emphasis on communication (talking, telling, questioning, inquiring.) Most responses stem from the first or second generation and thus reflect their (in) ability to relate to the Holocaust topic in the presence of family members of a subsequent generation. Interpreting it from a TCI perspective,³ the relational dynamic between individual family members, theme (Holocaust) and the group (family) seems to suggest a movement between excluding and careful opening, sharing and defending, conveying predetermined statements and offering process (later, they...). Sometimes I was not clear whether the interviewees reported direct statements of their conversation partners or included what was already their interpretations. In any case, the responses are selected and formulated from her perspective and thus her understanding and perception shapes the portrayed fragments of communication. For instance, reporting anti-Semitic remarks or comments seems to embody judgments of the daughters or grand-daughters. Therefore, searching for religious educational guidelines has to take into account how women's moral selves deal with the secluded or carefully censored topic "Holocaust" in the intergenerational context.

Looking back to the data results from Question 1., only one person mentioned that family was the place where she encountered the topic "Holocaust" in a moving or troubling way. Why is that? The few emotional references might shed some light on that issue:

³TCI stands for theme centered interaction, therapeutical method developed by Ruth Cohen.

Emotional Dimension

The expressed emotional dimensions have scarcely revealed something encouraging. Quite the opposite: feeling awkwardness, touching taboo, regretting and annoying on the side of the inquiring women. Parents and grand-parents responded with shock, reluctance, silence and curiosity out of the desire to control and defend. Ongoing silence, shame, and assigned low self-esteem of those who were ostracized during the Third Reich (such as communist or Jewish relatives).

The above-mentioned emphasis on communication seems to be overshadowed by inhibiting emotions. Within such an emotional context, who wants to deal with such a burdened topic? The task of learning to "relate" to the Holocaust must be done in this context which is shaped by decades of emotional obstacles. Family is the place where skills that develop and foster relationships are decisively shaped. If families have serious problems communicating among themselves about the Holocaust, what could possibly help the family overcome that "formation in avoidance?" What would make it possible for them to relate to each other precisely in that area they have learned to avoid?

Moments of Transformation

Moments of transformation among members of the first generation were related to time and changes occurring over time; changes in regard to: (1) a growing readiness to communicate on an excluded topic and (2) one's own perception and awareness.

In sum, the interviewees not only responded to particular "delicate spots," but to how the topic Holocaust in general was addressed in their family and own biography. Comparing the 10 "no" responses (almost a third !) with six responses to one's own biography in regard to delicate issues, I interpret that these women are on different tracks in regard to dealing with the Holocaust. Quite a few described in detail their own research and did not feel the necessity to name 'delicate issues' for themselves. Others were occupied with their family narration and seemed not yet to care too much about their own involvement. Others clearly expressed their discomfort, in particular toward expectations of others (school. . .) and thus are aware of their own critical and reluctant attitude. Those who developed already strong bonds to that topic, may never have experienced or do not recall "sensitive issues;" they are rather willing to formulate moral consequences.

3. What intrigued you to deal with the heritage of the Holocaust?

3.1.DESCRPTION

This question asks how the women got involved in the topic. Reading their responses, I have grouped repeatedly stated key terms in order to structure the individual responses.

Discovering a connection to other events/other themes

- Women genocide (persecution of witches)
- Political decisions and turmoil in current Palestine evoked my curiosity
- History always intrigued me. Already as a child I occupied myself with persecuted and oppressed people.
- Seminars on "bioethics" and "societal critique"

- Being concerned about growing racism and anti-Semitism
- Making money with Jewish gold; that victims still are treated unjustly
- Holocaust still haunts victims and victimizers; repression is not a solution
- Interreligious dialogue

None

- Accidental contact
- Nothing
- I don't do it. Historical awareness is important. I do not feel responsible or guilty myself for what happened then.
- I cannot relate to your questions

The Topic Intrigued Me

- Apparently the lack of knowledge of many Germans, individual fates of Jews, my lack of understanding how one race could dominate another
- I got interested (in 1995) in local history... informed myself, burdened myself

Emotional Reaction

- Consternation, anger, curiosity: how did that function?
- It's hard for me to watch movies
- I found it so horrible...more readings
- Shock in Dachau about what humans are able to do. Questioning myself: What am I able to do?
- I deal with it from time to time, because of a shock/guilt that we as Germans caused the Holocaust
- Deep embarrassment about the terrible German past, the message I feel in me to work toward compensation, my deep sense for justice and my Christian faith
- As a youth: complete bewilderment in regard to such an amount of injustice and suffering toward so many innocent people, precipitated by so many and tolerated by so many. Lately the anger about the increasing national thinking... xenophobia
- I am fascinated by the will to survive. (own family situation, fighting for psychological survival)
- "Shame, to belong to a nation...which was capable of killing others like in mass production."
- I was embarrassed about...what humans do to humans...in regard to my faith
- That humans can commit such atrocities
- "As a youth I read Anne Frank's Diary which touched me deeply."

Through Others

- Through the affiliation with the congregation I was led...to an attitude of responsibility
- Through very engaged history-teacher; experiences in Israel
- Through movies, later visit Buchenwald (but I do not deal with it intensively)
- History class in school, teacher who did it very extensively

- Feminist movement. "I am convinced that women are not able to kill 6 millions Jews like that. I am interested in recognizing my male patterns which find expression in such horrible deeds."
- Movies, visits to memorial sites, friends...
- Encounter with people who dealt with that topic also
- Though history class in school
- Through the anniversaries in 1995
- Visit in Yad Vashem, readings
- Trips to Israel, visiting memorial sites
- My family home
- During my studies in religious education the topic was unavoidable

Felt Responsibility

- Never again as long as she can do something against it.
- I do not want this to happen again.
- [through congregation]...that we as young Germans have a responsibility toward Jews...worked for 18 months with ASF in Israel, in order to foster reconciliation and encounter.
- For me the implications of the Shoah are primarily theological ones.
- My nationality as a German and thus my responsibility; my religious education/joint history with Jews.
- My birthday is on July 20; what happened then was always a call [*Auftrag*]
- My children should not only be confronted with that topic in school
- Since a year I am volunteering at "amnesty international."
- It is part of our German history. ... Vacations abroad precipitate conversations. It is important to address those things in order to avoid a repetition.

3.2.ANALYSIS

In analysing the answers, I will follow the categories according to their ranking in frequency. The highest ranking received "through others"(13 times). Looking closer at this category, it actually says "through others put into a teaching situation."

"The emotional reaction" follows next (12 times). Except one response (fascinated by the will to survive), all emotional reactions refer to emotions like shock, shame, consternation, horrible, embarrassment It seems that interest was evoked through strong emotionally felt experiences.

"Felt responsibility" has 9 scores, but this category actually requires people having dealt with the Holocaust already in one way or another. "Responsibility" is usually a response to something one has faced and been touched by.

"Discovered connection to other events or themes." This category was named 8 times, pointing to other historical situations of injustice, or an awareness for a current political situation or implications of the past in regard to the present.

"None" received four scores, whereas two women clearly expressed some reluctance toward the Holocaust topic in general and in more concrete ways against the assumed expectation to take responsibility.

3.3. INTERPRETATION

Those categories indicate that there is not just one general way to get intrigued with the Holocaust heritage. The teaching of others, connections between Holocaust and other situations, and emotional reactions are the three prominent ways which were named in this study. Each teaching situation and emotional reaction looks different, however, even if there are some commonalities to underline.

I wonder where did the women learn the lesson of "responsibility"?

4. Did you ever have personal encounters with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors?

4.1. DESCRIPTION

The responses are grouped into thematic categories.

Encounters Abroad:

- I have Jewish friends, in USA
- other students in Holland, never experienced negative reactions, was perceived as person, not German (has lived in Holland for 21 years)
- in Auschwitz

None Encounter:

- no, no, no, without knowing probably, unfortunately no, no, not consciously, only TV/ no, no, no (only in Israel during a visit in a Jewish family), no, no (in the sense of a personal encounter, but Israel, visit in synagogues...felt like "closed door"), no, no, no, 15 no's

Encounters in Israel:

- Encounters in Israel, similar to Arabic encounters
- Evening in Israel with a group of basketball players and three families
- Very personal encounters in Israel with survivors who shared their story. It was not easy to be German in those encounters. Here in Germany I do not have contact with Jewish people.
- Two weeks in Israel
- Twice in Israel, twice in Yad Vashem; encounter with a survivor at the airport (had approached her) who shared that her whole family perished and she herself was liberated in Auschwitz when she was 14.
- Encounters in Israel
- In Israel, friendships for several years
- During my studies in Jerusalem

Encounters in Germany:

- My first boss (4 years) who came back from the USA, he impressed me because of his leadership and strong social responsibility
- A long-term friendship with a Jewish nurse who needed ten years of therapy to come to grips with her Holocaust experiences
- In Vienna, seminar at the university by Oberrabiner Eisenberg

- Very brief encounter with Sinti and Roma during a conference in Boll
- Shoah survivors in a sanitarium in Bad Wildungen who can stay without paying (governmental reparation payments), i.e. psychologist who was hidden as a child and has been sick since then.
- Reading/lecture of a Sinti survivor and Ruth Weiss (Jewish)
- My father and grandfather who both survived war and imprisonment
- A public reading by Anita Lasker-Wilfish who survived Auschwitz; I could ask her a question afterwards
- During three Kirchentage, I attended events "Jews and Christians."
- In a shelter for mentally retarded people
- In Germany and Austria : I found in those situations my prejudices validated - and I interpreted that as heritage of the German NS
- During my studies in Berlin
- Visiting a Jewish congregation

4.2. ANALYSIS

Fifteen women admit that they never had a (conscious) encounter with a survivor or descendant.

Thirteen women encountered survivors or descendants of survivors in Germany. Next to Jewish people, the following were named: Sinti and Roma, mentally retarded people, father, grandfather (with question mark).

Eight women recall encounters in Israel

Three women had encounters abroad beyond Israel (Poland, Holland, USA)

In sum, almost 50% of the participating women never met a survivor or a descendant of a survivor. 11 scores go to encounters abroad, almost as much as in Germany (13).

Out of 33 women, only 5 times (about three or four women) referred to those encounters as friendships or longer lasting contacts.

4.3. INTERPRETATION

These results are puzzling since, on the one hand the women clearly recall even brief encounters with survivors in clearly identified locations. On the other hand, only three or four women actually seized the chance to develop relational skills in friendship or working situations. How can this lack of relational opportunities be bridged?

5. As a woman - are there specific concerns you would like to highlight?

5.1. DESCRIPTION

Since some women were wondering about this question, I added the handwritten comment in brackets: for example victim - perpetrator, feminist perspective. That might have had an influence on their reflections.

I chose the following categories to organize the various responses under key terms.

No Specific Concerns

No, ?, can't answer, no, I did not approach the topic from a woman-specific perspective,

primarily a problem of human behavior, no response, no response, no response, seems to be still a black spot, no response, no response, no response

Women as Victims

- Some parallels in regard to women's oppression, but my "suffering" had different roots, was never so terrible
- Question of parallels between various victim groups
- Remaining in the victim role and thus exonerating the victimizer?
- Today wanting to support minorities
- Women were not only victims
- "I do not allow a man to tell me what to do.... I would rather fight than be a victim. In a previous times, I would rather be a victim (abuse). I do not take it anymore."
- The burden which women specifically endured in concentration camps; what helped them to survive?
- Question of how the system of destruction relates to patriarchy? Which role did feminist movements play? (i.e. no closeness between socialism and feminism, closeness of Bourgeois feminism to Nazi government)
- "I do not know what kind of role Jewish women had...defenseless victim?"
- Women as victims - in daily life and in exceptional situations

Relating of Women

- I can relate more easily to female resistance fighters than to males
- I just discovered that I always talked to women (Jewish women, survivors)
- I became aware that I read only female biographies
- I got the impression that women stuck together (*hielten zusammen*), i.e. uprising, orchestra.

Women as Accomplices

- Question of *Mittäterinnenschaft*
- Seminar in church history ("Women in church struggle"): Christian women thought along national socialist lines, they were also permeated by anti-Semitism
- Women were also concentration camp warder who were similarly brutal
- In my family, men were more active in the foreground, women more hidden but also greatly involved via moral judgments
- Question of women's influence in education at that time
- Question of women's lack of resistance (organizing groups..)
- Women were also brutal victimizers
- Recently I got interested in women's complicity
- Is it correct that female warders were more brutal than their male colleagues? (Did they have to be "better" than their male colleagues?)
- Women and power - concentration camp warder
- Women as perpetrators in daily life and in exceptional situations

Women and Resistance

- Role of women in the Confessing Church and in resistance
- Strengthening women's resistance against their convictions [already listed under "Implications"]
- I can relate easier to female resistance fighters than to males [already listed under "relating of women"]

Implications

- I want to interrupt definitely that female strategy of 'not knowing' and not feeling responsibility...and supporting men to do their politics (see my grandma and even next generation)
- Strengthening women's resistance against their convictions
- How can women form groups today against xenophobia?
- Women should not allow others to exploit them
- For a long time I interpreted 3. Reich as "men's work." During the last years I begin to see women as perpetrators.
- As a woman it is important to intervene in political events, that women do not allow themselves to indirectly contribute to a xenophobic, racist climate via passivity.
- Example of World Day of Prayer (1994) - Women have other option for reconciliation (Jewish and Palestine women)
- Women have different but equally meaningful responsibility, women are not allowed to avoid taking responsibility

Perceptions

- Judaism is a patriarchal religion for me
- first association: Holocaust = extermination by men
- Experience women in that time differently than men?

5.2. ANALYSIS

The chosen categories represent themes the interviewees addressed. In numerical terms, following are the score rankings:

"No specific concern" was expressed by 12 women, more than 33%

"Women as accomplices" was also addressed by 12 women. Four women specifically mentioned the brutality of women in the camps. Two further concerns relate to one's growing awareness (process) about women's involvement as accomplices and women's subtle involvement such as in daily life, hidden behind men and women's influence in education.

"Women as victims" was referred to by ten women. Themes which were addressed are questioning the victim role, relation to other victims, lack of information, and implications.

"Implications" was addressed by seven women, pointing to current social challenges such as xenophobia, racist climate. More specifically women's option for reconciliation was highlighted, but also the necessity to interrupt female strategies of not knowing.

"Relating of women" was mentioned four times. The underlying themes were the discovered preference that it is to relate easier to other women and the impression that women stuck together at that time.

"Women and resistance" was explicitly addressed once; two additional times in the context of other headings.

5.3. INTERPRETATION

On the one hand, the high ranking of more than 33% of the interviewees not finding any specific concerns is quite surprising. On the other hand, as the literature review in Chapter 4 suggests, this lack of awareness might mirror the overall slumbering awareness that women were involved in the terror regime.

Looking closer to "women as accomplices," it seems that newer discussions on *Mittäterschaft* and women in the church struggle, and even findings on women's brutality as warders are becoming more and more known.

Looking closer to "women as victims," very differentiated aspects of women as victims appear. The identified themes (Questioning the victim role, relation of women to other victims, lack of information, implications) suggest that the interviewees can deal with a multi-faceted concept of victim. I did not find any slightest hunch of claiming the victim role for themselves, and even less to be stuck in the victim role. Their formulations rather suggest that the interviewees understand the victim experience of women as a departure point for further reflection or additional questioning (for example: addressing other victims, questioning the interrelation with victimizer).

Even if there are 33% who do not see at all specific women's concern, there are also at least seven concrete implications for today's responsibility. They move from the more general "equal responsibility" to "not allowing others to exploit oneself" to "women's options for reconciliation" and "working together against xenophobia."

For me relational threads are predominant in responding to question 5; particularly visible in quotes listed under "women as victims," "relating of women," and "implications."

6. As a Christian - do you see a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust?

6.1. DESCRIPTION

Reading the answers, the themes below are used to categorize respondents' answers:

a) Not Primarily a Christian Issue..(7)

- "No, I never considered it because of faith reasons, but rather as a human issue"
- " I am not sure I understand myself as Christian.."
- "Today I see the need to do it as a human being,..."
- "I see rather a necessity to deal with it as a German, less as a Christian; I didn't understand the context why Christians persecuted Jews."
- "Yes, but in a general way dealing with suffering."

b) Critical Self-reflection on Christianity (8)

- "What gives me the right to say that Christianity is the only and unique religion, regardless of the fact that Christianity emerged out of Judaism?"
- questioning the Christian claim to be unique and superior
- questioning the truth claim of Christianity

- Christianity emerged out of Judaism
- "Can I be a Christian without necessarily being anti-Judaistic?"
- "...the God image which must be changed. The almighty God died in Auschwitz at the latest."
- From a Christian perspective, it is not possible to apprehend how this could happen
- "Dealing with the Holocaust means to me to face the abyss [of humankind]: capacity for violence..., capacity for cowardliness..., capacity to be traumatized, destroyed...as victims. Facing that abyss is important for my concept of God and my anthropology" (avoiding naive concepts).

c) Complicity of Christians (10)

- German Christians contributed to the guilt.
- "During the course of history we Christians sowed hate and contempt toward Jewish people through the church." (Luther)
- Implications of the Shoah are primarily theological ones.
- Perpetrators understood themselves (partially) as Christians
- Terrible that enthusiasm, when Hitler seized the power - theological interpretations "German messiah"
- "Christians participated in the persecution of Jews, but also protected them"
- Holocaust as the strongest anti-Christian [non-Christian] event; I do not understand why the majority of Christians did not resist
- How was it possible to accomplish such a genocide in the Christian western world?
- Anti-Judaism as root of the Holocaust
- Feminist theology also made many mistakes and currently is discovering them....

d) Questioning Past and Present Church (7)

- Difficulty with efforts to missionize Jews, teaching them...; expectations for institutional church
- "The church tolerated the procedures of the Nazi, even though she must have seen the ostracism of minorities....Churches looked the other way, or legitimized it by saying that the Jews killed Jesus."
- Where is the church today active against ostracism of minorities?
- Passive role of the church during NS time
- "Why didn't the church oppose in a stronger way those atrocities and mobilized the population?"
- Sure, because the church collaborated (German Christians)
- "Actually it is a central task of the church to keep the topic alive. Unfortunately I observe that only seldomly."

e) Christian Teachings which Suggest a Different Lesson (5)

- Because of the demand 'to love your neighbor like yourself' - rather than look the other way
- "Yes, as a Christian that is almost the most important thing: to respect the other, to respect the other side, the stranger."

- Because of justice, love for neighbor, peace
- God's love reaches out to every person...we have to care that the loveliness of outsiders becomes visible
- "As a Christian, there is a particular chance to deal with the Holocaust in seeking refuge with the merciful God who grants a new beginning and haunting feelings of guilt can be confronted."

f) Rethinking Christian-Jewish Relations (8)

- "Yes, because Christianity is rooted in Judaism and nevertheless, several times in history, Christianity became guilty of despising the Jewish people."
- Rethinking relationship to Judaism
- Joint religious roots of Christianity and Judaism, "one God"
- "Yes. The Jewish faith is the root of my faith."
- "I think it is a terrible loss for us Christians not to have practicing Jews in our country."
- "We Christians have our roots in Judaism; ... we have to integrate them in a stronger way."
- Not to close the eyes against anti-Judaistic content in NT
- Especially Christians were guilty of despising observant Jewish people, and they continue that through their arrogance and allegedly "right" faith.

g) Implications for the Future (14)

- "We Christians violated so much the Jewish religion, that I feel it partially my task to watch that this does not continue."
- "Being Christian means also political responsibility"
- In order that it will not be repeated, to speak up in the present and future
- My Christian conscience rejects contempt of humans,...
- "As a Christian, I feel a special responsibility that Christianity can still be trusted.."
- "As a Christian, I feel an obligation due to my anthropology to contribute so that something like that never happens again."
- Responsibility as a Christian for protecting human life
- Definitely, Holocaust is everywhere..
- Because of mushrooming neo-nazis groups, where innocent citizens become victims
- Important to deal with human capacity in regard to good and evil, to feel the hunch of what options/abyss are possible in one's own life
- To avoid a repetition
- Traditional Christian anti-Judaism precipitated the Anti-Judaism in Nazi Germany. That creates obligation.
- "I am a small part of the church and I carry also responsibility. Where do I resist against contempt and injustice, like Jesus did?"
- Different angle (raised in former GDR): after the *Wende* (1989/90), governmental plans were uncovered which intended to destroy Christians. "I find it important to uncover mechanisms, to analyze and to develop strategies against the success [funktionieren] of oppressive structures." - awareness what it could mean to

belong to a specific group of people...- "feminist concern with Christian responsibility"

6.2. ANALYSIS

In regard to each category or theme, I will present some analytical reflections.

a) It is less a Christian issue . . .

Seven (no-) responses fall into that category, whereas two were pointing to the Holocaust as a general human issue (repeated under Question 7 also), and one woman emphasized the German aspect of it.

b) Critical self-reflection on Christianity

Eight women formulated questions and critical reflections on Christian beliefs in light of the Holocaust. They question Christianity's self-understanding (claim for truth), the neglected Jewish foundation of Christianity, and the unfathomable evil.

c) Complicity of Christians

Ten comments address this delicate issue, pointing to the historical involvement of Christians in persecution of Jews, anti-Judaism in NT, and the lack of integration of Christian Jewish roots. Those ten comments required some historical knowledge of how regarding Christians treated Jews in the past. A statement like "Christians participated in the persecution of Jews, but also protected them" implies an ambiguity embedded in Christian praxis.

d) Questioning past and present Church

Seven comments challenge the church as an institution. The language of the responses differentiated between "Christians" and "church." The strongest 'blaming' language seems to have been used regarding the church institution.

e) Christian teaching which suggests a different lesson

Five comments employ Christian teaching which suggests a different way of acting and dealing with extreme evil. Each comment seems to address a challenge posed by the Holocaust heritage: Love your neighbor... and do not look the other way.

Respect the stranger.... Motivated by striving for justice...God's love reaches out to outsiders.... Merciful God allows people to confront feelings of guilt. The first four comments emphasize communal outreach; the last one is an invitation to deal with their guilt feelings.

f) Rethinking Christian-Jewish relations

Out of eight comments, one woman acknowledges the loss of Jews for Christians today. The other responses reflect on the historical connections between Judaism and Christianity.

g) Implications for the future

Fourteen comments elaborate on implications for the future, or what kind of "lessons" they see. Three comments affirm that "Holocaust is everywhere", patterns of it can be found in current daily life such as the neo-Nazis. Three themes which were repeatedly named are: feeling a responsibility to speak up so it will not be repeated; protecting life against anti-Judaism; resisting injustice and uncovering oppressive mechanisms. Two comments address additional concerns, namely "that Christianity can still be trusted" and "to feel the options/abyss are possible in one's own life."

6.3. INTERPRETATION

a) Not Primarily a Christian Issue . . .

It seems that those who did not see the Holocaust as a Christian issue rejected that idea because of lack of knowledge ("I didn't understand the context why..) or they wanted to highlight it as a general human issue. It seems that there is the question of motivation at stake, and less a clear knowledge in which ways Christianity contributed to the Holocaust. I am wondering whether this emphasis on a general human issue is a reaction to a restrictive faith tradition always emphasizing guilt in humans and particularly women. Therefore, reframing the Holocaust as a general human issue might broaden the perspective (in their view) and allow cooperation also with non-Christians.

b) Critical self-reflection

c) Complicity of Christians

d) Questioning past and present Church

At least b)-d) express critical reflection on Christian self-understanding, the institution of the church, and Christian praxis. Twenty-five comments refer to these three categories, a remarkable score if compared with Q 5 (12 comments expressed a self-critical reflection under "women as accomplices"). This high percentage (despite seven women who did not see a specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust as a Christian) might be due to those women's involvement as church employees, diaconal ministers, pastors and social workers.

e) Christian Teachings which Suggest a Different Lesson

Acknowledging Christianity's involvement in the Holocaust seems to push people to look closer to Christian teachings in search of those lessons which can counterbalance the inherent Anti-Judaism in the Christian tradition.

f) Rethinking Christian-Jewish Relations

I called this category "rethinking Christian-Jewish relations." According to the responses it might better be named "recalling Christian-Jewish historical connections." Very few Jewish congregations live in Germany, and this may explain why none of the women suggested to reach out to Jewish people. (Compare also how few ever met Jewish persons. Q4)

g) Implications for the Future

The two comments which address additional concerns, namely "that Christianity can still be trusted" and "to feel the options/abyss are possible in one's own life" seem to me closest to the very complex heritage of the Holocaust for Christians: Is Christianity still trustworthy - and how to deal with one's own potential for evil (and goodness)?

As an overall impression, Q6 evoked more comments than the other questions.

Later, we have to ask how those three identity dimensions might relate to one another - in the frame of this questionnaire.

7. As a German, (how) does your national identity matter in regard to the Holocaust?

7.1. DESCRIPTION

Thematic categories are again used to structure the responses:

a) Specific Task as a German (17)

- Never again. "As Germans we have to be in particular sensitive to signs."
- ...and thus I want to be sensitive for corresponding current movements.
- Particularly as a German, I have to face that past.
- Where does being a perpetrator start? ...sensitizing myself for daily situations...practicing friendliness toward "others."
- It is important to me to point others to the fact that Austria belonged also to the perpetrators.
- As a German I feel an obligation to deal with the 'Hitler in me' and therefore with the Holocaust.
- As grandchildren we have to carry the legacy of our grandparents. There is no such thing as *Gnade der späten Geburt*. (Grace of late birth).
- Insofar as I feel responsible to work against a repetition of..
- I want to know what specifically of "German mentality" led to the Holocaust.
- I feel indirectly co-responsible for the German history. [really - or unclear formulation?]
- The topic guilt must not be forgotten... have to tell my godson because he cannot meet survivors anymore. This topic belongs to the German/ to my history.
- Through my German identity, I feel a special responsibility toward the Holocaust.
- To face the perpetrators - They are asking my identity
- More closeness because it didn't happen somewhere else
- Inquiring into my own share of cowardliness and brutality. Perpetrators aren't just "the others."
- Important to deal with history -- Jews and other people were *Mitmenschen*, neighbors.
- Working through one's own history and tradition ("wordly" and "Christian")

b) Inseparable Part of German History (6)

- I do not want to deny the German history.
- It is my history. The history of that country to which I feel strangely connected.[Austria]
- Because it is German past -- evokes more interest, because I am German
- Belongs to my past, part of German history; important to deal with the history
- That I never will be able to deny my German history

c) Strong Emotions of Guilt and Shame (11)

- for me there are no identity issues because I cannot feel guilty for the deeds of the previous generation.
- I often feel shame in regard to German "stupidity."
- It is embarrassing that my country was so stupid, brutal, full of irrational hate in the 20. century...[Austria]
- to feel powerlessness, guilt in a diffuse way, not being able to undo it, guilt heritage = collective guilt
- In particular abroad I feel shame to be German.

- I feel more shame about what happens in Germany today (if the Holocaust wouldn't have been). I do not feel responsible for that which happened at that time; that is not a reason to be ashamed of my German identity.
- Regards my dealing with the question of guilt, I am German. Would I have participated in the Holocaust actively? Would I have had the courage to resist?
- "I feel shame to stem from a people who brought so much suffering unto humankind - and who is well off today that they exclude again people."
- Shame to belong to such a nation that was capable of killing people as in mass production.
- I am quite fed up with being reduced as a German to this part of history.
- Perhaps *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* becomes quite difficult because the world public is "pointing with the finger" to us Germans.

d) No Special Meaning (5)

- I do not find specific correlation.
- No
- I do not know if that ... has to do with being German (namely partially to identify with my forbears without being able to undo it. I do not know how I would have reacted at their place.)
- Not important. Each human being has the potential for Holocaust (males more than females).
- I wish that not only Germans are dealing critically with the past, Holocaust isn't a German matter, rather it is a human one.

e) National Identity (11)

- I cannot develop a national feeling (*Nationalgefühl*). Right-wing thinking is disgusting to me.
- I do not have a German identity. I feel rather like a person from Holland or European.
- German identity means also to put on perpetrator glasses.... not only identification with victims.... "I would like to stand on the control towers (*Wachtürmen*) in order to feel 'How could it happen?' "
- German identity is split similar to my family belonging. Theme of being "homeless", "because I cannot identify with German values, simultaneously I have them in me."
- In particular abroad I am aware of my German identity. Am I measured according to the German past?
- I am concerned that abroad people learn about German women and hopefully also men who deal with the past and have a different political and human attitude than the national socialist.
- Regarding my roots, I am German, I also have "German mentality" which was able to commit such atrocities.... - This means, again and again, grasping what happened then, and where ostracism occurs today.
- This dark part of history will always belong to my German identity.
- German history continues to have an effect on me as German.

- The Holocaust cannot be considered without Germany

7.2. ANALYSIS

In listing the answers, I employed categories, which emerged as themes:

a) Specific Tasks (equals "implications" at other places of this study)

17 women (52%) apprehend a specific task.

The following themes were named: Becoming sensitive to daily situations, for current movements, for signs: responsibility that it does not happen again; facing the perpetrator in oneself; reaching out to others; dealing with the past.

b) Inseparable part of German history

Six comments address this, eight additional comments under "specific task" and "National identity" refer to that also.

c) Strong emotions of guilt and shame

Responses to other questions entailed also emotional comments, but this question prompted a separate category. Eleven women expressed strong feelings, most of them shame and guilt and embarrassment. Two women are angry about reducing Germany to that part of history.

d) No special meaning

Five women do not find a specific correlation between their national identity and the Holocaust. They reject or seem to be unsure whether the Holocaust has something to do with being German. Two women would prefer that the Holocaust would be considered as a general human failure.

e) National identity

Additional to c), 11 women expressed strong feelings towards their (lack) of national identity such as "is split," "am I measured according to the German past," "do not have a German identity."

7.3. INTERPRETATION

Q7 inquiring on national identity evoked numerically the strongest feelings.

Regarding national identity, : the comment "I have also German mentality which was able to commit such atrocities" requires some clarification. What is mentality? Traces of inheritance could easily evoke a conviction of biological predetermination (as in Goldhagen's argumentation) but there is a chance to choose!

Comparing Q5, Q6, and Q7, the following observations can be made:

Q5 (women's identity) evoked 12 "no" responses and 37 comments.

Q6 (Christian identity) evoked 7 "no" responses and 52 comments.

Q7 (German identity) provoked 5 "no" responses and 45 comments.

According to those scores, these 33 questionnaire women seem to be most challenged in regard to their Christian identity since they wrote 52 comments on a great variety of aspects. Their German national identity allowed only 5 women to reject a special responsibility, the so-called "no" response. 12 women do not see a correlation between their gender identity and the Holocaust.

8. If you see yourself as a lesbian - in which way does that possibly have an impact on approaching the topic Holocaust?

DESCRIPTION

For this question, I only list the answers. I do not pursue them further with analysis and interpretation of Q 8. My original hypothesis was that there might be a connection between one's sexual identity (minority experience) and openness to relate to the Holocaust past. This was not verified at all; therefore, I dropped this path.

Thirteen women responded to Q8.

- I cannot say. I don't see it from a "lesbian" perspective.
- In discussions with evangelicals on being lesbian, Holocaust is an illustration for me....
- Recently I occupied myself with lesbians during the 3.Reich. But I cannot yet discover a connection to the Holocaust.... Right extremists have contempt for Jews and homosexuals.
- In Holland I learned and apprehended how homosexuals/lesbians were treated. I haven't heard that in Germany. (But also I didn't deal with homosexuality in Germany. For 20 years I have been living in Holland.)
- Only much later I "came out" as lesbian. I am aware that living in that time I would have been persecuted... Sure, I experience my own moments of being affected, because being Jewish or homosexual was just a supporting role for the persecution. [sic] Today I am more concerned about expelling the Palestinians.
- I understand myself as a handicapped lesbian....I am aware that during the 3.Reich, homosexuals and lesbians were incarcerated; also handicapped people were incarcerated and killed. Today I do not worry for myself... I worry about current endangered groups such as asylum seekers who are deported through the government...I want to be alert that activities and speeches coming out of racism and fanaticism may be stoppedI have felt it in my own body how painful it is to be ostracized.
- For me, lesbian identity means to belong to a minority which is predetermined *per se* for the victim role or scapegoat role. This is another indication how important it is to unravel mechanisms of oppression.
- Regarding the 3.Reich, to perceive myself as a lesbian, offers the option to stand on the side of the victims. That can be quite relieving....I do not know how political the lesbian scene was at that time...I am very annoyed if other victims do not recognize gay and lesbian victims of the Holocaust. There is a hierarchy of victims among the victims. The horror of that time could have been a new beginning for homosexuals, but only few were interested in their suffering. And still today, the *Bundestag* is fighting whether they were actually victims or not.
- After my coming out I was touched that they had the pink triangle in concentration camps, that gays and lesbians were killed. ...On the one hand, some of my relatives support the 3. Reich in extinguishing specific groups of people; on the

other hand they validate me as a person (They do not know about me being lesbian).

- Sometimes I think being woman in a patriarchal society, and even more as lesbian belonging to a minority, I face experiences of oppression, devaluation and no chances in daily life ; that provides an approach to threat and oppression on an emotional level. Nevertheless I would rather approach it through my own experiences of violence.
- For the first: no. Except that I am interested in the persecution of lesbians and gays.
- I am influenced in terms of being aware that homosexuals were persecuted and deported to concentration camps. Being lesbian is something I do not want to change even if I could...It is horrible to be persecuted and to enter concentration camps, etc., just because of that. It doesn't matter if someone is Jewish, Black, homosexual, handicapped. In regard to that, I can identify with the Jews.
- As a lesbian I also belong to a "group of humans" who were held in contempt, punished and mistreated, some also killed. That has to be addressed and recalled.... Church as an institution and Christians have a responsibility, the presence of lesbians and gays can contribute to that awareness..

CONCLUSIONS

In the closing section of this research study I will uplift problems and further questions which were unearthed in describing, analyzing and interpreting the responses to the seven research questions.

Q1

In Q1 I was exploring where the interviewees were touched or troubled by the Holocaust. Since the intellectual approach seemed to have played a major role and the relational approach a very minor one, the question emerges in light of a huge lack of relational experiences how can this be acquired or taught?

Furthermore, many encounters occurred abroad and shaped their awareness (Q 7). How can this be taken into account in the religious educational practices in Germany?

Q2

In Q2 I researched for delicate spots in family histories.

Results of Q2 suggest that on the one hand, there was a strong emphasis on communication, such as talking, telling, questioning, inquiring. On the other hand, since only one person acknowledges her family as a place where she was touched by the Holocaust topic, communication hindrances were seemingly acquired and learnt in the family. It seemed also that the emphasis on communication was overshadowed by inhibiting emotions. In such an emotional context, who wants to deal with such a burdened topic?

Then the problem arises how ambiguous messages from home shaped the perception of victims and perpetrators. How can communication obstacles be overcome?

Q3

In Q3 the interviewees were asked what compelled them to deal with the heritage of the Holocaust.

Their responses suggest that there is not just one general way to get interested and hooked on that topic. Teaching situations provided by others, discovering connections to other areas, and emotional reactions were the three prominent ways named in this study.

I am wondering how and where they learned "feeling responsibility," actually a reaction to the faced situation.

Q4

In Q4 the women were asked to reflect on encounters they might have had with Jewish people or other descendants of survivors.

Fifteen women never had a (conscious) encounter with a survivor or descendant. Only three or four women were connected for a longer time to a survivor or a descendant. The problem lies at hand: how can this lack of relational opportunities be bridged?

Q5

In Q5 the interviewees were asked whether they would like to highlight specific concerns as women.

More than 33% of the interviewees did not see any specific issue at stake for women in regard to the Holocaust. There seems to be a lack of knowledge about how women's role contributed to the NS system and in which ways women maintained the dynamics of generational silence.

On the other hand, the named insights regarding various aspects of victim roles appeared to be a departure point for further reflection and additional questioning on which people can be built.

Q6

Q6 invited respondents the women to reflect on the specific necessity to deal with the Holocaust - as a Christian.

This question prompted the most comments of all the seven questions. On the other hand, none of the women suggested that Christians reach out to Jewish people. In light of Q4, very few women ever met Jews and even less ever had an ongoing relationship; thus it seems beyond their imagination, to reach out to Jewish people.

According to the many and very different responses, religious identity seems to be significant in the context of the Holocaust. How do the three identity dimensions relate to one another?

Q7

Q7 inquired whether national identity as a German matters in regard to the Holocaust.

Numerically, this question prompted the most expressed feelings. Only five (compared with seven and twelve) women rejected the idea or were not sure if they, as Germans, have a specific relation to the topic. 52% (the highest score among all questions) see a specific task (or implications) because of their national identity.

These two noticeable reactions (shame/guilt and specific responsibility) suggest that in regard to the Holocaust, the national identity matters most. But how is this awareness acquired? What does that mean for the "relational space"?

APPENDIX B

FIELD STUDY II: ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

VISIT IN BERGEN-BELSEN, a former concentration-camp in Germany

Field study II is action research, exploring the educational contribution of visiting a memorial site. In Appendix B, I first will provide some general information on the sample, then introduce the memorial site Bergen-Belsen, and finally present the research results in three steps. After describing the responses to two sets of questions, then analyzing and interpreting these findings, some concluding questions will be addressed which emerged out of Field study II.

General Information on the Sample:

- **Background of the visit to Bergen-Belsen in July 1998:**
Rural household engineers are supervised by the Evangelisches Dorfhelferinnenwerk, a church-related institution with its headquarters in Stuttgart. During the course of one of their educational seminars, they did a field trip to Northern Germany and took advantage of the opportunity to visit the former concentration-camp Bergen-Belsen. The participants did not make this selection, rather the director offered them a trip to Bergen-Belsen. No one was forced to participate in this visit, they could remain at the youth hostel if they wished. It was also their choice to fill out the questionnaire. All 31 women who actually visited Bergen-Belsen responded to the first set of questions before the visit; 29 women turned in the second set of questions after the visit to Bergen-Belsen.
- **Professional and educational background:**
These women are trained domestic engineers, primarily working in rural families. In case of parental sickness or other emergency, the farmer family can apply for such a *Dorfhelferin* (literally: village assistant) who will run the household, takes care of the children and in some cases manage the farm for several weeks or months. They do not have a higher education. The director of the respective institution made the point that the participants were not much used to reflection and writing. Therefore I tried to formulate the questions in a simple and clear, yet non-manipulative, way.
- **Size of the sample:** 31 women participated in this fieldtrip, 31 women answered the first set of questions; 29 women returned the second set of questions.
- **Ages:** 2 women were born in 1938,
1 woman was born in 1960,
26 women were born between 1965 and 1975,
2 women were born in 1976.
Average Age: 29 years.

In regard to the sample of Field Study II, I do not know the individual participants. I am familiar with the church institution and the director who organized the educational field trip. Those women can be considered representative of the Protestant church milieu in Württemberg, especially of younger women involved in caring activities on a local level.

An Overview on the Memorial Bergen-Belsen¹

Chronology

In 1940, the *Wehrmacht* [German Army] establishes a prisoner of war camp for 600 French and Belgian soldiers.

From July 1941, an estimated 20.000 Soviet prisoners of war are kept in the open and under extremely cramped conditions.

From March 1944: a separate section for sick prisoners from other concentration camps is established.

From August 1944: Female prisoners especially from Auschwitz-Birkenau arrive.

January 1945: dissolution of the prisoner of war camp.

From January 1945: Tens of thousands of prisoners from concentration-camps close to the front are crammed into Bergen-Belsen. Extreme overcrowding and mass deaths.

15.April 1945: Liberation of the camp by British troops.

In total, in Bergen-Belsen died about 50.000 concentration-camp inmates and about 30-50.000 prisoners of war.

In 1966: Opening of a documentation center with an exhibition of the history of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. Since 1991: Uncovering the remains of buildings in the camp by youth organizations and school classes.

The Bergen-Belsen Memorial offers information:

- a permanent exhibit of the history of the prisoner of war camp and concentration camp Bergen-Belsen and the overall history of the National Socialist system of persecution
- an explanatory booklet on the permanent exhibit
- special exhibits
- film shows
- library
- guided tours for visiting groups

DESCRIPTION of 31 responses

Feelings and Thoughts on the way to Bergen-Belsen

1. This will be my x visit to a concentration-camp/ memorial site of the Holocaust

for the first time:	7
for the second time:	9
for the third/fourth time:	15

2. A young person should deal with the atrocities of National Socialism -- I think:

that is not so important:	1
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¹Information brochure of Niedersächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung. Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen 29303 Lohheide.

that doesn't bother me: 0
 that is good: 8
 that is very important: 22

3. What I know already about the Holocaust I learned through
 public school: 27
 film, movies: 23
 stories told by grandparents or other contemporaries: 18
 books which I chose: 14
 conversations and discussions with friends and colleagues: 13
 public discussion and speeches of politicians: 5

4. I feel a little awkward before the visit to Bergen-Belsen...
 YES (a) 22 NO (b) 4; 5 women marked answers from (a) and (b)

- (a) I feel a little awkward because..

- I do not know what will be in store for me: 5
- Suffering and injustice get under my skin easily: 19
- That can throw up difficult questions: 5

Additional handwritten remarks:

...When I see what our forebears have done

...I am scared of my own curiosity

...We'll be at the site and will have it presented to us quite vividly

- (b) I do not feel awkward before that visit because..

- I know it already: 9
- Fortunately I have a "thick skin": 0
- I will not deal with it in a detailed way: 1

Additional handwritten remarks:

... It will touch me [sic]

... Because it started here in Germany [sic]

... Because I already worked through some stuff during a trip to Israel

... Because this topic occupies my mind always and thus is always present

5. In my family the topic Holocaust
 was discussed openly: 10
 sometimes touched on: 15
 anxiously avoided: 0
 never appeared: 6

ANALYSIS

Q 1: "This will be my x visit to a memorial site of the Holocaust...."

Out of 31 women, 24 women had already visited a former concentration camp, it was not new to them. Fifteen women seemed to be familiar with what to expect because it was their 3. or even 4. visit. Only 7 women went for the very first time.

Q 2: "A young person should deal with the atrocities of the National Socialism...."

No one marked "that doesn't bother me"; rather 30 women were convinced that it is important to deal with the topic.

Q 3: "What I know already about the Holocaust I learned through..."

-- Public school education was in almost everyone's' memory (27). Two women were born in 1938. During their school years, teaching about National Socialism had not been mandatory. Two participants did not mention their school education, it seemed not to have been meaningful to them.

-- The power and impact of films/movies is tremendous (23 scores). Many women mentioned having seen "Schindler's List."

-- Eighteen women (58%) recall narratives by grandparents and contemporaries. As in Q5, I wonder if they really listened to reports about the Holocaust and not the war experiences and National Socialism in general.

-- Public discussions and speeches of politicians were quite low on the scale. Only 5 women mentioned this category.

-- Fourteen women marked books which they chose to read. This means that they had a particular interest in the topic, especially if they did not belong to a population that reads frequently.

-- Conversation with friends/colleagues (13) ranks lower than stories from grandparents/contemporaries (18). This is remarkable since the peer group could be a place where a taboo can be more easily addressed than with people who were part of that time (such as grandparents or other contemporaries).

Q 4: "I feel a little awkward before the visit to Bergen-Belsen..." (a) YES (b) NO

22 Women marked YES, 4 women marked NO, and 5 women marked reactions from both (opposing) options.

The women approached this question in three ways: (A) They felt awkward, or (B) they did not feel awkward, or (C) they marked contradictory answers.

(A) In total, 27 out of 31 women felt somewhat uneasy about going to Bergen-Belsen, even if they had stated in Q2, that a young person should deal with the atrocities. One woman corrected the Questionnaire to make it fit her needs in saying "I do feel a little awkward ...because I know what will be in store for me." Self-critically I have to admit, that I did not offer this option.

(B) Four women clearly marked "I do not feel awkward...", and they also indicated that this was their third or fourth visit to a memorial site. Looking at those four responses, it is remarkable that they reason "because I know it already" (4.visit), "because I know it" (3. visit), "because I worked already through some stuff during a trip to Israel" (3.visit),

"because this topic occupies my mind always and thus is always present" (3.visit). All four women recall that the topic was openly discussed in their family (3) and sometimes touched on (1).

(C) Those five women with apparently 'contradictory answers' had marked:

- under (a), "suffering and injustice easily get under my skin" and under(b)"I will not deal with it in a detailed way"
- under (b), NO "I know it already" and, *handwritten*, "it will touch me." This woman also visited a memorial site for the fourth time, but still responds *handwritten* "a lot was new to me"(Q1 after the visit)
- under (b), "I know it already" and *handwritten*, "because it started here in Germany". She made the connection to her home country and she was one of the few who marked that she felt uncomfortable visiting Bergen-Belsen as a German (Q3 after the visit).
- One woman (born in 1938) marked under (a) "I do not know what will be in store for me" and under (b) "I know it already".
- One woman marked, under (a), "Suffering and injustice easily get under my skin", and "That can throw up difficult questions"; and, under (b) she marked "I know it already."

Regarding the apparently contradictory answers, several explanations are possible: Either she feels familiar with the general facts, but is also aware that there could be new aspects to it that she has not yet been exposed to at this particular site. Or: She did not understand that (a) and (b) indicated opposing perspectives. Maybe, they read all possible options as multiple choices and neglected the headings which divided (a) and (b).

Q 5: "In my family the topic Holocaust..."

Twenty-five out of 31 women recall that Holocaust was a topic in their home ('talked openly' and 'sometimes touched on'). That appears to be quite high. It might be that the readers did not pay careful attention to my language (asking for Holocaust, not war) and thus they mixed it in their recalling. To talk about the war is a socially acceptable topic.

None of the woman marked "anxiously avoided." Self-critically I realize that the option "anxiously avoided" is not value free - and obviously socially not acceptable. Assessing the lack of a conversation as "anxiously avoided" requires that the judging person him/herself has worked through some of the complex family dynamics related to the Holocaust topic.

Six women are aware that this topic was never addressed in their home. In 15 families, the topic sometimes was touched on. Depending on how the reader understood "sometimes touched on," it could mean either "it was OK to talk about" -or family members only reluctantly and carefully approached it. If it was understood the latter way, then 21 women have a feeling of "it was not talked openly." This figure would come closer to the impression other researches indicate (such as introduced in Chapter 2) .

INTERPRETATION

Q 1

Quite a high number of women had paid one or even several visits to a memorial site. But: which impact did it make on them? According to the scores of Q4, only four women felt

comfortable because they had gone through that and were aware of the impact it would have on them.

Q 2

With one exception, each woman affirmed the necessity of dealing with the atrocities of National Socialism.

On a theoretical level, they had gained the insight they were supposed to learn in post-war Germany. On a cognitive level, they knew what was important. But - what about other dimensions of one's awareness and involvement in the topic? Is it possible to retrieve from that data some insight into their emotional and moral understanding? See Q 4.

Q 3

It seemed that the mandatory school education conveyed some kind of knowledge to almost everyone. From this kind of study we cannot conclude what kind of impact it had. In chapter three, Gertrud Hartmann will present the issue of traumatic school teaching. Björn Krondorfer and women from Field Study I address the problem of teaching information but not learning how to relate to that past.

In my literature review I found also that Germany's public awareness in regard to the Holocaust was strongly shaped by movies. (F. i. at the end of the 1970s the American series "Holocaust" introduced this term into public language.)

The fact that only a few marked "public discussion and speeches of politicians" raises the question of whether we are dealing here with a gender-specific perception. My literature review (Chapter 2) shows that there is a strong tradition of public discourse to deal with the Holocaust which shaped the public ethos decisively (according to Björn Krondorfer).

Q 4

A. An overwhelming majority of women felt somewhat uneasy about going to Bergen-Belsen. For most women there was an emotional issue visiting a former concentration-camp.

B. Looking at the four responses of those who did not feel awkward, I interpret these statements as implying that they have dealt with the topic extensively and thus they seemed no longer scared about the emotional impact. Still, their rationales indicate that there were emotional dimensions dealt with in the past. Does that mean they acquired an attitude about relating constructively to the Holocaust past? Following observation makes me hesitate to affirm that question: Q3 (after the visit) inquires about one's feelings as a German in comparison to a Norwegian woman. One woman does not respond to that question at all, the other three women marked "No". To me that indicates that they did not discover the impact of the Holocaust past on their own National identity - even if it was discussed at home.

Although, on the other hand, that woman who had traveled to Israel and "worked through some stuff already" concludes [in her response to Q1 after the visit] "I observe again and again that we human beings can easily be tempted in the same way today as they were 50 years ago." That means she was able to compare moral implications from that time to our time. She even uses the inclusive "we."

Q 5

Is this result applicable to a general observation that there is more talk among the 2. and 3. generation than there had been among the 1. and 2. generation? Does this result mirror an increasing readiness in 1998, after the consciousness raising celebrations of 1995? In 1988, Heimannsberg and Schmidt still acknowledge that "a widespread symptomatic pattern today is the silence within families."² Ten years later, with many public events remembering the 50. anniversary of the collapse of the Third Reich in 1995 and Goldhagen's book and its public discussion in Germany in 1996, there may have occurred a shift. But, this remains unclear regarding this questionnaire. Other methods of inquiry would be necessary to follow up with these questions. (see Conclusions).

DESCRIPTION of 29 responses

Feelings and thoughts after the visit in Bergen-Belsen

1. I felt the afternoon has been

- Informative: 15
- Depressing: 14
- Stirring up: 11
- Ashamed: 6
- Made me angry: 2
- little bit Boring: 1
- superfluous: 0

Additional handwritten remarks:

(The emotional reaction [such as I, D, S, A, M, and B] is identified following the comment.)

I felt the afternoon has been . . . because:

... *It is not easy to see what humans can do if God is not Lord over their life. [D]*

... *My knowledge was refreshed and expanded [I]*

... *I pondered that violence is in each of us. I'm convinced that these mistakes can happen again today. [I,D,A]*

... *To see so much pain, families died [D,A]*

... *So many people were tormented [S]*

... *A lot was new to me [I]*

... *I feel again and again dismay when I am confronted with the atrocities of the Nazis [S,I]*

... *It is remembered again [I]*

... *The information was poor and difficult to understand. The plans are confusing. [I]*

... *Good movie, good structure of the plans [I]*

... *That something like that could happen at all [S,D]*

²Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, "Psychological Symptoms of the Nazi Heritage: Introduction to the German Edition," in The Collective Silence: German Identity and the Legacy of Shame, trans. Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 3.

- ... *I found information about people (families and individuals) which I got acquainted with in Israel [I,D]*
 - ... *I think that each person must be careful not to do such things, or at least prevent such deeds [S,D]*
 - ... *I observe again and again that we human beings can easily be tempted in the same way today as they were 50 years ago. [I,S]*
 - ... *Watching the presented movie was impressive, with original pictures [I,S]*
 - ... *I had to watch how humans treat humans [D]*
 - ... *It is horrible what humans are able to do! [D]*
 - ... *Humans are able to commit such atrocities and so many people had to suffer and die without their fault [I,S,D]*
 - ... *Because we humans are able to such terrible atrocities [A]*
 - ... *Actually it is unimaginable that something like that could happen, actually [eigentlich] next to an ignorant population [I,S,D,A]*
 - ... *Good [I]*
 - ... *I had to discover again to what humans are capable of and can do it again [A]*
- Seven women did not add handwritten remarks, but had marked A; D; S; S; IDM; SDA; SD as their reaction on the afternoon.

2. After the visit to the memorial site I find it

- important: 29
- unnecessary: 0

to see something like that as a young person.

3. Was it uncomfortable for you to visit the concentration camp as a German?

yes: 6

no: 22

No response to that question: 1

Can you imagine that a Norwegian women would have felt the same?

yes: 16

no: 6

No response to that question: 7

One handwritten comment: I think each person regardless of nationality should feel awkward about these atrocities.

4. Due to the impressions of this afternoon I probably will

- tell friends about it: 12
- first meditate for myself: 19
- will get a book and read more about it: 10
- try to focus on the next and forget Bergen-Belsen soon: 2
- encourage a friend to visit also a memorial place: 10

5. This afternoon I was mostly impressed by...

handwritten remarks following:

- *The movie, to see how humans are capable of such horrible deeds*
- *The pictures*
- *The story of individual persons - fathers amongst children*
- *To look up to Jesus, the beginning and end*
- *Years ago it was farm land. The farmer tilled the soil for crop, seed and harvest. Later it turned into suffering and pain and death for many people. Something which should and must never happen again.*
- *The movie and the graves of the Jews.*
- *The report of the camera-man in the movie.*
- *That despite the destruction of all buildings etc. the memorial site did not lose its power to speak.*
- *That all humans are the same, and that's also the case today, and it could happen again.*
- *The movie showing the British how they liberated the camp.*
- *The masses of corpses; how humans could be like that.*
- *The movie. And to walk over the campus where the atrocities were committed. To see the hills which cover the bones of the maltreated humans.*
- *Movie, exhibition, pictures.*
- *The movie which was shown, presentation of individual fates of people.*
- *The movie and exhibition, in particular the original letters from that time.*
- *Documentation. I found information on familiar families, individual persons with whom I was acquainted in Israel.*
(as mentioned under Q1)
- *The mass graves with the many corpses*
- *How many people perished and how they were buried later in those mass graves. I felt this as without respect and without dignity how the corpses were tossed around, or were pushed into the grave with a bulldozer.*
- *The movie as introduction and the remembrance book on the inmates*
- *The accounts of individual fates*
- *The movie and all the memorial boards which documented everything*
- *The pictures and the movie*
- *The graves; photos of people whose suffering was written in their faces; the movie showing the bulldozer which pushes together all those many corpses.*
- *The movie. I got chilled when I saw how the corpses were treated by the machines. I felt the dignity got lost, because the people were treated worse than animals during their lifetime, and as corpses, they were not identified nor did they receive a grave.*
- *The movie made a strong impression on me. The statement that each human has such dark sides, it could happen everywhere. That is not an excuse, but helps me to understand. Also the statement of the camera man after the liberation of the camp: he would not be able to review that movie and he didn't watch it since.*

Already watching the pictures was impossible to grasp - and to see the whole by person, with one's own eyes - that must be impossible to talk about.

- *Movie and mass graves*

- *The documentary movie and the pictures, because they stir you up again and again and stimulate a new reflection.*

At the bottom of the second flyer I asked what kind of relation they have to church/religion.

Fifteen out of 29 women answered that question. Thirteen women consider church/religion as an important part of their life. Two women marked a critical attitude, none indicated a distant connection to the church.

ANALYSIS

Two women's responses are missing. What might be the reasons? I do not assume that their questionnaires were misplaced. Rather I think there is some reason behind that. They may have been exhausted, too occupied, too shy, or too overwhelmed.

Q 1: "I felt the afternoon has been..."

Many women indicated several reactions to the visit. (F. i.. Informative and stirring up). "Informative" received most scores (15). Six women marked exclusively "informative". That means that 23 women identified some kind of emotional reaction after the visit.

Amazingly, only 3 women marked exclusively "ashamed", and only 6 marks in total can be counted. This is surprising, since women traditionally felt shame for a communal disaster. (CF feminist discussion 'And again I feel guilty'.) Comparing these scores with the result from Q3 (before the visit) saying that only 5 women consciously were informed by political discourse ("Guilt"), I am wondering if we touch here a distorted perception on women. Or, do we have to differentiate between feeling ashamed and feeling guilty? If we look closer at those responses marked exclusively "ashamed", they comment *I had to discover again what humans are capable of and they can do it again. Also: ...because we humans are able to such terrible atrocities.* Three women did not write a comment.

Q 2: " After the visit to the memorial site I find it...."

Everyone (29) was convinced that young people should see a former concentration camp. In comparison to Q2 (before the visit) 22 out of 31 evaluated this as "very important." I have to add that Q2 did not offer 4 options, but only 2, namely important/unnecessary.

Q 3: "Was it uncomfortable for you to visit the concentration camp as a German?"

One woman, who visited a memorial site the fourth time, did not respond to that question at all. Either she forgot - or could not make sense of it.

This result seems to reveal that there is a very low awareness about their national identity and the connection to a perpetrator nation. Two handwritten remarks found in Q4 (before the visit) allude to that by saying "...when I see what my forebears have done" and "...because it started here in Germany".

Q 4: "Due to the impression of this afternoon I probably will..."

Many women (19) indicate the need some time for an internal processing. Only two women plan to move on as quickly as possible whereas 22 women want to enter conversations with friends about this visit. Ten women plan to get more information about the topic. To encourage someone else to visit a memorial site received also 10 scores, an activity which I assess as the most demanding. In sum, 32 scores can be found under "starting some kind of activity" (getting a book, talking to friends, encouraging friends) as a result of this afternoon.

Q 5: "This afternoon I was mostly impressed by..."

All but two participants jot down some handwritten remarks. This is quite remarkable because their education did not encourage them to express their own reflective thoughts. One woman just marked , maybe affirming "This afternoon was mostly impressive to me" - which could have been also an understanding of the German formulation, if someone neglects the inviting dots...to express one's thoughts. Seventeen women mentioned the movie/pictures which left a strong impression. Eight comments referred to the corpses/mass graves which must have been shown in the movie. Seven comments allude to some kind of moral interpretation. (see below)

Employing Mary Elizabeth Moore's method of analysis, I identify the following

frequently used words:

movie, pictures, mass graves, corpses, bulldozer, individual fate, corpses tossed around, humans, people

Symbols:

corpses; mass graves; campus (as former farm land, as site of atrocities, as still making a powerful statement)

Activities:

walking over the campus

watching the movie

the place has still power to speak

discovering information on Israeli families

seeing how the corpses were treated

learning about individual fates (by means of exhibition, remembrance book,...)

additional category: ethical interpretation

- to see how humans are capable of such horrible deeds
- something which should never happen again
- all humans are the same, that's also the case today, and it could happen again.
- how humans could be like that
- bulldozer tossing corpse: without dignity, dignity got lost,
- the statement that each human has such dark sides, it could happen everywhere. That is not an excuse but helps one to understand.
- movie and pictures stir you up again and again and stimulate new reflection

INTERPRETATION

Q1: Even if all of them had some kind of information before visiting Bergen-Belsen - still, the need for more information seems to have been felt. What function does information have? Does it open access or deflect, open people or feed intellect? Marten Marquart and others point to the importance of learning **names**; information in regard to concrete lives.

Information seems to meet an educational value in a German context. For instance, the first group of the four exchange programs in field study III emphasized a historical approach, rather than a victim approach, to the Holocaust museum in Washington -- in order to offer the "whole" history. Do both research observations reflect exactly the dilemma in German Holocaust education as a primarily cognitive education -- but not having been taught how to relate to those facts?

"Ashamed" was not a primary reaction to the atrocities. That is different from my experience and the dominance of "guilt" in German public discourse. I would have expected more shame reactions. Reasons? Too young? Is it that they do not feel involved in the German context? What creates an awareness of shame? Did they miss the perspective of victims and the perspective of other nations?

Q2: Visiting a memorial site seems to affirm a lesson Germans somehow learned already: it is important to deal with it. But surely there is more to it.

Q3: What struck me most is the fact that actually only one woman could imagine that there is a difference between being German and Norwegian in visiting a former German CC. Before reading the responses, Herta Leistner had already expressed her assumption that their lack of national awareness may be connected with the fact of visiting a cc in Germany (in comparison to Yad Vashem, Israel or USA.) They seem not to experience themselves as belonging to the perpetrator nation. They did not leave home and thus did not feel themselves as German, connected to those who were the perpetrator.

My own insights were primarily precipitated when I was in another country, felt myself as a foreigner, and realized the different perspectives of other nationalities in regard to Germany (and also listened to the voices of victims).

This observation is a very crucial point for my dissertation, namely the young women's lack of awareness of what it means to be German in the context of the Holocaust. A pedagogical quest emerges: Which pedagogical means are instrumental to teaching this? Many Germans travel frequently to other countries, but primarily as tourists. Thus they avoid really encountering "the other," and do not learn about victim voices. In contrast, those who answered considered church/religion as an important element of their life (13).

Q4: Self-critically I have to acknowledge that those women did not have the option to pursue more outgoing activities such as a political initiative or joining a social activist group (such as Amnesty International, for example). It seems remarkable, that "made me angry" was a reaction which was only twice chosen (Q 1, after the visit). Is anger not an

appropriate emotion after the heaviness and overwhelming impression of evil they were exposed to?

Q5: It seemed that those visitors were mostly touched by two symbols of identification: how the dead corpses were treated (movie) and how the camera man gave them an opportunity to look through his eyes and feel his discomfort.

Connection to religion/church:

No one marked "distant contact"; only two women understand their relation to church/religion as distant-critical. (cf. the sample in Field Study I.)

Did I overlook the category "I do not care about church/religion" - and is their lack of response conveying this kind of message? Since Germany is much more secularized than USA, many people do not care anymore about church; however, working and being employed by a church affiliated agency might suggest that people do not feel free to be outspoken about their genuine attitude toward church/religion.

CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding part I will raise questions unearthed by analysis and interpretation of the data findings. Those questions revolve around the following themes: national identity, emotional reactions, "success" of a memorial visit, and ambiguity.

Dealing with one's national identity

When the world becomes more and more a "global village," we have to integrate our nation's heritage in our own acting and communicating. Thus, for developing a mature identity, it is important not only to be aware of one's own journey and the impact of one's family on one's journey, but also the meaning and heritage of one's nation.

Objective: German women have to "train and sharpen their memory" in regard to their nation's past.

It seems that a single visit to a concentration camp will not necessarily cause one to question one's national identity, Christian identity or gender identity. This reveals quite a difference from the international exchange program, where the students were exposed for several days to Auschwitz, had dealt with the topic for several weeks, and had traveled in a group of descendants of victims.

In Field Study II, the awareness of being German was addressed before they went to Bergen-Belsen (CF two remarks in Q4). The awareness of Christian identity was mentioned in Q5 after the visit, but in an arrogant way, not having been even touched by issues such as theodicy.

Emotional reactions:

Emotional reaction in itself may not contribute decisively to a deeper involvement. For instance: one interviewee was exposed four times to such kinds of experience and no longer referred to any emotional reaction. (I am assuming that she at least went through

some emotional reactions at some point.) She also did not make any comment on national identity.

Ambiguity

Regarding the contradictory answers regarding emotional reactions highlights the ambiguity of the women in approaching the Holocaust, especially among those who "know it already."

How to measure a "successful" visit?

What could be considered a pedagogical "accomplishment" in visiting a memorial site? The measures could be: Having been touched, having gotten a glimpse of the victims and perpetrators perspective or being able to name ethical implications. Ethical implications could also be identified, since seven comments referred to ethics.

APPENDIX C

FIELD STUDY III: RESEARCH ON MOMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

FOUR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation (1989)

The third generation after the Shoah (1991)

Living in a Post-Shoah World (1993)

Living in a Post-Shoah World (1995)

These four documents are documentation of four international summer exchange programs during which German (mostly non-Jewish) and American (mostly Jewish) students spent four weeks traveling together, confronting the Holocaust as a third generation. They visited sites of Jewish life and culture in the USA, traveled to Germany to former Jewish sites and small still existing communities, had encounters with families and survivors, and finally spent a few days in Auschwitz, Poland.

I am drawing from journal entries (1989) and essays (1991, 1993, 1995) which the students wrote after the program as their reflections on the trip. Since the emphasis of my thesis refers to the situation of German women, my analysis and interpretation employs exclusively voices of German non-Jewish women.

Each Study presentation will follow the sequence of:

The **DESCRIPTION** will provide background information on the respective group and its context.

The **ANALYSIS** will pay attention to

- (1) themes the young women addressed in choosing their area of reflection
- (2) emotional dimensions they expressed
- (3) implications for prospective commitments they want to pursue

The **INTERPRETATION** will search for

- (4) moments of transformation which seemed to have taken place and might provide some clues for Chapter Six and Seven.

The **CONCLUSION** will formulate central insights that I want to build on and problems which need to be addressed.

"A Journal of a German/American Student Exchange Program":

Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation.

July 31 - August 28, 1989

DESCRIPTION

This first group comprised 24 students from two distinct backgrounds: The American group embraced 12 students, most of them Jewish, but also one African-American person, and one fundamentalist Christian who dropped after 12 days because the program was too liberal for her. She was also the only person ever to drop. The German group had also 12 students, mostly non-Jewish, including one woman from the Netherlands. The three

moderators were from the USA (Björn Krondorfer, Ruth Laibson) and Germany (Jon Schmidt). Ruth Laibson from the Interfaith Council in Philadelphia had a more observational role. She writes in retrospect ". . . the distinct differences in how the Americans and the Germans, as groups, dealt with the significant questions...the Americans came to the program with an openness and a willingness to share their innermost feelings, while the Germans, as a group, were wary of authority figures and often unwilling to trust in the program itself."¹

In regard to the gender ratio 17 participants were female and 10 participants were male. The eight German female students are: Gisa, Kathrin, Annette, Lucia, Uta, Birgit, Gesche and Claudia. Since the last three persons did not send in their reflections for documentation their voices will be missing.

The editors of the 1989 documentation published chronological journal entries from various participants and identified the respective event or site the group had attended that particular day. In my analysis, those events or sites are referred to in italics. The documentation published several journal entries from various individuals. Therefore the analysis also pays attention to several events, authored by the same person. The journal entries are in English; that means it is not the mother tongue of those women. Documentation of 1991, 1993, and 1995 printed the essays in the respective mother tongue and added at the same page the respective English translation.

ANALYSIS

GISA

- (1) In the context of *Sabbath with Jewish families in Philadelphia*, Gisa addressed: "what it means to live as a survivor."
- (2) "it was very important for me" [OC: three times] "The whole family is so nice, I am so lucky to have met them. It was an important experience for me."
- (3) "For him it is part of his life but not 100% of his life until today It encouraged me a lot because I was looking for possibilities and directions in which to go."
- (4) Gisa realized what it means to live as a survivor. Listening to a survivor helped her to realize that, and it was important for her to learn that before she spent some time with a survivor family.

KATHRIN

- (1) In the context of *US Holocaust Memorial Council*, Kathrin addressed: "We got to know about the Council's initiative to build a large Holocaust museum in Washington. We were shown the school report of a Jewish child that was misinterpreted by the Council members...."
- (2) "It [OC: Holocaust Museum] seemed out of place to me, rather a display of national pride instead of a remembrance of what happened...." "This incident made some of us

¹Ruth Laibson, "In Retrospect," A Journal of A German/American Student Exchange Program: Encountering the Holocaust as a Third Generation, July 31 - August 28, 1989, : 60.

German students fear (maybe yet irrationally) how they would deal with the other material."

KATHRIN

(1) Referring to *Open Forum Discussion at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation*, Kathrin identified three issues which were discussed: (a) "Can a people 'possess' its history? Does the Holocaust belong to anybody?" (b) "A museum about victimization versus an historical approach" and (c) "Education through simulation and transfer of historical sites."

(2) ad (b) "But some of us Germans feared that future visitors would consider less important the question of how it could happen and the question of how we could prevent it from happening again today....I think (or fear) that the isolation of the topic will cause only a few people to look at today's issues. And I can't forget about another feeling of mine: What about Germany today? Even if, as was also feared, people do not develop an anti-Germanism... it seems somewhat unfair to me that the visitors should only be interested in this part of German history...." (c) "Some people felt ...an inauthentic simulation."

(3) "... I realized how important it was to work against these uncaring processes....And so why not try and get people involved somehow?" Kathrin concluded by saying "I remain confused about this issue."

(4) Washington's plan for a Holocaust museum with a victimization approach evoked uneasiness among the German group and unearthed fear of anti-Germanism.

GISA

(1) Having experienced the *Jewish Life in the lower East Side*, Gisa reflected on:

"It was important to see the fullness of Jewish life in New York, because it is so different from Germany where such a kind of Jewish life is unusual."

(2) neutral observation

GISA

(1) After the *Discussion on anti-Semitism* Gisa admitted: "Through this discussion I became more sensitive to listening to and talking about biblical exegesis and general Christian self-understanding."

(2) "I was a bit shocked afterwards that I didn't realize [anti-Semitism] that in this way during the sermon."

(3) "I realized that it is also a very important thing for me to learn more about theology."

(4) The discussion after the anti-Semitic sermon helped her to understand it. She was a bit shocked about herself that she did not notice that during the sermon. She experienced her own sensitizing through discussion and reflection with others.

ANNETTE:

(1) After the *Visit to the Synagogue and Cemetery Worms; Darmstadt Synagogue*, Annette wrote: "gravestone ... in form of a German oak tree, in which the dates of birth and death had been chiseled. That is a clear sign of how deeply the Jews were rooted in Germany."

(2) "Jewish cemetery in Worms - a visit which was quite fascinating for everyone in the group I believe... the most interesting gravestone to me...."

GISA

(1) After the *Visit to the Synagogue and Cemetery Worms; Darmstadt Synagogue*, Gisa reflected: "I realize that Jewish culture is mainly in museums, without life They will

never be able to realize on their own the loss of a culture and the problems of those who still live here."

(2) "It is a shock for me to come back to Germany, the country I am living in, and look at it with the help of Jewish eyes."

"It is so horrible to realize that even though you yourself can see those facets of reality, you cannot make everyone see that reality so that they might look more sensitively at the problems of today."

(3) "Draw consequences from the past and become active today."

(4) After having encountered Jewish perspectives, her own country looked different to her.

LUCIA

(1) After *Jewish Museum and Community Center Frankfurt - Flight to Berlin-West* Lucia pondered on three impressions: First, she observed many pairs of children's shoes at the elementary school - and anticipated the reversal of the Auschwitz experience. Then, she was startled to realize that she was prepared to think of Ignaz Bubis in clichés. Finally, she enjoyed returning to Berlin and would like to welcome everyone - and at the same time learned about a nazi statement made in the airplane to some of her American friends.

(2) "A better day on the whole. The fourth Jewish community of Frankfurt lives!" [OC: her exclamation mark]

Regarding the situation in the elementary school, Lucia mentioned "How scared we are of going to Auschwitz."

Regarding the controversial feeling arriving in Berlin, Lucia said " That is the situation. Quite precisely. Turns my stomach."

(3) "I don't feel like running away any more." [regarding the visit to Auschwitz and based on the reversal of the Auschwitz experience: Jewish children's shoes.]

(4) She met Ignaz Bubis in Frankfurt - and was intrigued to find herself surprised. She realized that clichés were also in her mind. "I've never had that proven to me this convincingly."

LUCIA

(1) She addressed the group process and various needs that were difficult to meet in the midst of tiredness and many impressions of the day.

(2) "Some of us want to talk ... what does it mean to be German - preferably before we go to Auschwitz (because how can you talk about what you like about Germany after you've been there?).... All we manage is a sharing of impressions of the day, which is something, but not enough."

UTE

(1) Referring to the *Afternoon with German families*, Ute shared: .."the day developed contrary to my expectations"... "the offer [OC: to talk about the NS time] came from the people of that generation. In addition, the stories they had to tell were not of resistance or a critical appraisal of the Nazi regime... she asked herself how much ignorance and indifference she was actually capable of ... we encountered the issues of xenophobia and problems of minorities in the Federal Republic today"

(2) "I perceived that day with some skepticism.." The German hosts - in their 60s- asked if we had any questions about the NS time. "This was astonishing for me because as a young German, you have to exercise extreme caution in posing questions about this time period

and are normally fed the standard line: We didn't know anything. But now, the offer came from the people of that generation."

(3) "Relationships to foreigners and minorities like they [OC: host parents] have been able to develop, would be desirable for all of us and could help to prevent another brutal mass murder, before it has a chance to begin."

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Themes which were addressed:

- * Visiting a family and observing the life as a survivor
- * Being informed about plans and issues for building a large Holocaust museum
- * Observing fullness of Jewish life in New York
- * Learning about anti-Semitism
- * Learning about Jewish rootedness in German culture at a gravestone in Worms
- * Discrepancy between one's own discovery (seeing through Jewish eyes) and the ignorance of the majority in Germany
- * Contradictory impressions after coming back to Germany (hope and discouragement)
- * Group process
- * Honest and open encounter in a German family

Emotions which were expressed:

- Relief that the survivor could move on with his life
- Anxiety, fear of anti-Germanism, unfairness only to focus on this part of German history
- No emotional response to the lack of Jewish life in Germany (only "it is unusual")
- A bit of shock about her own lack of awareness in regard to anti-Semitism during a sermon
- Interest, fascination (Jewish cemetery)
- Controversial feelings corresponding to controversial observations in Germany (relief about Jewish life in Frankfurt and stomach turning after a Nazi statement in the airplane)
- Uneasiness with absence of opportunity to talk about things they liked about Germany before going to Auschwitz
- Skepticism against older Germans was overcome by their unexpected openness

Implications for prospective commitments

- Encouragement in looking for directions to go
- Understanding the importance of working against uncaring processes - but still feeling confused
- Wanting to learn more about theology (after having encountered anti-Semitism in a sermon)
- Becoming active today
- Developing relationships with foreigners and minorities would be desirable

INTERPRETATION

Moments of Transformation (1989)

A. Realizing what it means to live as a survivor

Gisa recognized that listening to a survivor gave her a glimpse of how hard this life must be. This eye opening prepared her for a deeper understanding during a weekend stay in a survivor's family. She was able to recognize the tension and challenge in this family shaped by traumatic experiences during the Holocaust. She learned to appreciate the way the father deals with the impact the *Shoah* still has on his life but does not allow himself to be overwhelmed by it.

B. Becoming aware of anti-Semitic implications in a sermon

The discussion after the sermon helped Gisa to realize that she did not notice the anti-Semitic underpinning. To listen to the sermon in a group of peers and learn about the various perspectives after the sermon, raised her awareness and led to self-discovery. Concerned about her own blindness, she expresses the wish to learn more about theology.

C. Having encountered Jewish perspectives, her own country looked different to her. For four weeks Lucia had left the familiar environment whose conditions are taken as a given. She was exposed to other perspectives, learned to see "through Jewish eyes" those who had suffered incredibly and she is now coming back home to the perpetrator country. She calls it "shock" standing for the deep emotional experience, that the hitherto familiar must be evaluated differently. Her own perception has changed dramatically.

D. Discovering one's own bias

For the first time, Lucia met Ignaz Bubis in Frankfurt - and realized that clichés were also in her mind. She named her first impression honestly and recognized how this impression is nurtured by Jewish clichés she had stored in herself.

The third generation after the Shoah between remembering, repressing and commemorating attempts of a common time in Philadelphia, Berlin, Auschwitz July 25 - August 22, 1991

DESCRIPTION

American/Jewish and East/West German student group, facilitated by Björn Krondorfer and Christian Staffa, and attended by observer Ruth Laibson. Five Christian and five Jewish students from the USA and five West-German and five East-German students traveled four weeks together. This time the group was smaller and they visited fewer sites in order to have more time for group processes. I will listen to the three non-Jewish German voices: Barbara, Iris, and Mirjam.

ANALYSIS

BARBARA

(1) Encounter with survivors in the US, Poland and Germany

(2) "I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the survivors for sharing their stories and helping us to face our own histories. Each story affected me differently ... provoked sadness, despair, anger, and helplessness."

(3) "When considering these events [OC: foreigners assaulted in broad daylight], it becomes all the more necessary to foster encounters between survivors and our generation in order to learn the lessons of Germany's Nazi past. The German participants of this program have a special responsibility since our society has not yet realized Eddie Gastfriend's plea: 'to learn from the past'."

(4) "What I remembered most were our encounters with.... I also remember Eddie Gastfried's use of German phrases from the camps, the very language, to which I am intimately tied."

IRIS

(1) Responsibility, Shame and Guilt: A German Perspective

(2) "I am torn, I am embroiled in the German past.... I continuously feel betrayed and pushed to the edge, for I want to find the truth for myself In this program, the perspectives of victims and victimizer collide again in my head and soul. The fact that the third generation of postwar Germany still feels some of the real guilt only shows how deep the denial goes."

(3) "To arrive at a level of responsibility, we need to carefully look at and remember the horrors, and allow feelings of grief, pain, anger and indignation to emerge."

"To continuously question oneself and society requires strength and courage."

(4) "The survivors' stories gave me the strength, love and hope to find language for that which Germans have tried to avoid for the past 40 years In light of the horrors of German crimes, the unimaginable sufferings of the victims, and the stories of survivors, the German stories of affliction sound absurd, perverse and full of self-pity."

MIRIAM

(1) Facing the Holocaust as a West German - differences between the US and Germany facing the Holocaust

(3) "When I returned to Germany, I immediately began to research my own family history. I realized that my father had been waiting for just such an opportunity and we had long talks. They were painful for both of us; and yet we were relieved."

(4) "The session on family histories, to which we were asked in advance to bring photos and memorabilia, became an embarrassing moment for us Germans Apparently we Germans did not take this task seriously, and I became aware of the level on which we had hitherto dealt with the Holocaust."

IRIS

(1) Political implications of the Holocaust

"Is personal vulnerability and the experience of being oppressed the starting point for political activism?"

(3) "There are no recipes for any particular political lesson from the Holocaust."

"From my point of view identity begins with being able to show myself on the one hand and remaining vulnerable on the other."

"Encounters, "exchange", common experiences, new knowledge and the pictures of Auschwitz ... which are deeply engraved in my mind, will influence my actions and my being, making me more sensitive and enabling me to pass some of it on."

(4) In literature and Holocaust research it is mostly the victims who are active in reminding. Why is it that Germans are not concerned? We need acts of resistance in Germany, especially in the face of her denial, economic boom and unification.

Experiencing oppression as a woman and lesbian was my starting point for political activity. This starting point made me also more sensitive to other minorities and led me to a more intensive examination of German history. . . complexity of social power structures. As a German I am part of a white, Christian-secularized, dominant culture. As a feminist and lesbian I am part of a minority."

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Themes which were addressed:

In the 1991 documentation the selection of themes plays a more crucial role. It was totally up to the participants to choose a specific theme and to take this as their area of concentration.

- * Encounter with survivors
- * Responsibility, shame and guilt & (in a second essay) political implications of the Holocaust
- * Facing the Holocaust as a West German

Emotions which were expressed

- Gratitude for being able to listen to survivors, but also sadness, anger and helplessness
- Feeling torn, feeling embroiled in German past, feeling betrayed and pushed to the edge

Implications for prospective commitments

- German participants have a special responsibility to learn from the past
- Continuously question oneself, to look carefully and remember the horrors, to allow feelings of grief and pain in order to arrive at a level of responsibility
- Immediately starting to do research on her family history, engaging a dialogue with her father.
- Deeply impacted by the program, she will be influenced in her actions, more sensitive and pass some of it on.

INTERPRETATION

Moments of Transformation (1991)

A. Painful discovery with one's own language

Barbara listened to Eddie Gastfried and was touched by his sharing. In an atmosphere of openness, two language meanings are clashing painfully: the survivor is referring to the language of his perpetrators, the same language to which she is intimately tied, her mother tongue.

B. Survivor stories call into question German stories of affliction

Learning about the unimaginable suffering of the victims, sheds a new light on the more familiar German stories of affliction; in Iris' ears they sound perverse and full of self-pity.

C. Discovering the degree to which the German group had dealt with the Holocaust.

Observing the differences in presenting the various family histories conveyed an awareness of the level on which the German group hitherto had dealt with the Holocaust.

Living in a Post-Shoah World
Reflections of American, German, Jewish and Christian Students
3rd summer program on the Holocaust
July 21 - August 19, 1993

DESCRIPTION

The whole group was comprised of 20 college and university students from the United States and Germany. The American group consisted of six Jewish and four Christian students with diverse denominational affiliations (among them a Korean American). The German group embraced people from former East and West Germany (among them an immigrant from Afghanistan).

I will listen to three German, non-Jewish women's voices: Barbara, Bärbel and Claudia.

ANALYSIS

BARBARA

(1) Shaping remembrance: "At two occasions during these weeks we tried to formally express our need to remember ... that those commemorations would be expressed in such a way that everyone could keep his or her different perspective. At the same time, we wanted to make sure that individual commemorations could be shared with others."

(2) "During the preparations I was afraid we would not agree on anything In the end I was very happy about this circle. That our language did not abandon us completely at this place of horror was for me a very religious experience."

(3) "All the time, I was thinking about Fackenheim's' main admonition not to give Hitler a posthumous victory. Our circle, our candlelight, and the few words and songs represented to me this way of life."

(4) "When we sang the Tikva at the end, I was very glad to be with this group in Auschwitz - a group in which the singing of the Tikva really meant hope, even at the most hopeless place...there was the question with which right I, as a German, was singing the Tikva in Auschwitz. Do the children of perpetrators borrow Israel's song of hope to find consolation in Auschwitz? This would be cynical. In our group, though, I made the experience that we can get invited to participate in the commemoration of others. And I felt comfortable singing along."

BÄRBEL

(1) Was there another Germany? Conversations with Hans Coppi and Kurt Goldstein.

'All Germans are Nazis.' "This statement ... aimed at a deeper German mentality and could not be answered with a simple "no".... the more urgently I wondered about Hitler's adversaries and the resistance."

(2) My curiosity with respect to this topic "I believe that this important conversation enriched our program. *Es gab sie also doch.*" (They actually did exist)

(3) "I hope that these kinds of encounters gave our American peers some comfort and hope so that they can revise their initial hypothesis - and not just for the individual person."

(4) "All Germans are Nazis." This statement of Beth with which we Germans were confronted during the first days of our stay in America American prejudice...aimed at a deeper German mentality and could not be answered with a simple "no."

CLAUDIA

(1) Living in Germany today: we cannot repress our history. Germany, the country of the perpetrators!

(2) "Am I guilty? What have I done? I am German, born in Germany.... I am living today, not 55 years ago. Where is my guilt? That I am born here? Can birth be a burden?"

(3) "We should not forget that the policy of extermination could be implemented so fast because of the many accomplices.... To turn a deaf ear seems to be part of today's agenda As regards our program about the third generation after the Shoah, the question arises if this German third generation attends to commemorating and remembering or to repression? As some people, who have suffered greatly, continue to have some hope for this third generation, the rioting does not stop in Germany."

(4) "The hope and trust that I was able to experience with survivors of the Shoah during the program is what keeps me going in Germany."

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Themes which were addressed:

- * Shaping remembrance
- * Germans who resisted
- * Living in Germany today

Emotions which were expressed

- Fear of not finding an agreement, nevertheless finding language at the place of horror, which was considered to be a religious experience
- Feeling relief that there were also Germans who resisted
- Troubled by being born guilty, questioning that
- Fear of not being able to break that cycle, fear of living in Germany, fear of being despised as a German

Implications for prospective commitments

- Commemoration as a way not to give Hitler a posthumous victory
- Wish that the encounters with German resisters comforted the American peers
- Acknowledgment, respect, love -- values of humanity, searching for them and the courage to try them out and break out.

INTERPRETATION

Moments of Transformation (1993)

A. Participating in the commemoration of others despite one's perpetrator heritage

B. Being confronted with the prejudice that all Germans are Nazis

Having been confronted with an American prejudice that all Germans are Nazis led to a search for "the other Germans" who resisted. Bärbel mentioned that this statement was aimed at a deeper mentality, but still her way to deal with it was to find comfort in Germans who resisted. Did she escape the "deeper challenge?" At the end she hoped that her American peers would revise their initial hypothesis.

C. Hope and trust experienced with survivors keeps her going in a difficult Germany

Claudia struggled with "birth as a burden." She felt the tension to have to go back to her country, the country of the perpetrators where riots continue to happen. She felt guilty when she did not speak out and when she did not act. She felt frustration, that it is so difficult to interrupt the silence in her home country. Survivors who expressed hope and trust in third generation Germans keep her going in a difficult Germany.

Nach-Lese

Living in a Post-Shoah World

Reflections of American, German, Jewish and Christian Students

July 4 - August 16, 1995

DESCRIPTION

Björn Krondorfer and Christian Staffa were the facilitators. Ruth Laibson functioned as observer. The group visited sites in Philadelphia, Berlin and Poland and was comprised of ten American students and ten German students (among them East-and West Germans, and one living in Rumania).

At this place, I will listen to the five non-Jewish German women voices namely Kathrin A, Mandy, Katrin S, Elfi, and Susanne. Elfi's identity is that of a minority German since she was born and lives in Rumania.

ANALYSIS

KATHRIN A

(1)What does Auschwitz mean to me?

"I lived in the former East Germany, the part of Germany that emphasized anti-fascism as its prime quality. One did not have to include oneself among the perpetrators but could identify with the "good guys". This trip to Auschwitz [some years ago when she was 17 years old] was for me a decisive point, an impulse and inspiration to get more involved. Auschwitz became something like a red thread in my head, drawing larger and larger circles."

(2) "After the second stay in Auschwitz [in the context of this program] I no longer feel empowered. Just the opposite. I feel uncertain and have many questions."

(3) After the first trip to Auschwitz: "... brought me back to myself. I once again could decide between essential and non-essential things, and personal problems were brought into perspective. I knew what I should do with my experiences."

"After the second trip to Auschwitz:... I can no longer feel like a neutral observer. I am the child of my parent I believe it is not enough to keep the experiences for oneself; one must give something back in return.... I think I should deal with people who are on the political right or have absolutely no political opinion."

"Above all, Auschwitz to me demonstrates what humans -- all humans? -- are capable of in their limitless ignorance, cowardice and naiveté. It also means to prevent it from ever happening again, despite the fact that I know that there are similar camps in the former Yugoslavia, and I am not doing anything about them. It makes me question myself."

(4) "Ever since the program, I see myself on the perpetrator side -- also because of participants in the group who were non-Germans. In Israel too I felt one of the guilty ones because I am German. Do I belong to the next group of perpetrators?"

MANDY

(1) You must not let it destroy you.

"... when realizing that I could never live up to that responsibility....I cannot fulfill the responsibility, and his and the other survivors expectations."

"In that moment I thought for the first time: You simply cannot return to Germany. You simply don't have the strength to live with the people the same way as before."

(2) "Yes, one should feel the pain emanating from this place, feel the powerlessness when returning to the mendacity, superficiality and indifference of German society."

"Fear, uncertainty, feeling helplessness, worried I might also have to say "Well, I actually knew what was going on but what could I have done against it?"

(3) "There is an uncertainty that overwhelms me when I think about what may happen in five, ten or twenty years. Then I think of a sentence that I wrote into my journal already in 1992 during my first visit to Auschwitz ... which expresses what I became aware of at this time: History doesn't repeat itself. But sometimes it looks damn similar."

(4) "I don't have the right to accuse them of any guilt if I don't know whether one day my children or grandchildren will 'accuse' me."

"You must not let it destroy you" that is the knowledge about what happened, the question about the why and how and the torturing question on which side I would have stood ... that is the politics of this country that is practiced also in my name and, above all, the fear about the future of this country in which I am living."

KATRIN S

(1) "The other perspective" -- the perpetrator perspective. -- The avoidance of the tabooed and uncomfortable "perpetrator perspective" that forces us to cope with the darker aspect of our psyche.

(2) She was disappointed about a missed chance, but also afraid of her own feelings.

(3) "What I want to convey is the idea that every person has the potential to become a perpetrator.... I think that we can only learn from the past if we are always aware of this human weakness and if we try to recognize the perpetrator perspective."

(4) "I think it was a chance we missed when we left out ... the central tower at the entrance of the annihilation camp of Birkenau, from which the SS-guards could watch the inmates and keep them under control....The view from the watchtower conveyed the perspective of the perpetrator.... In view of this temptation that comes with the position of superiority I became afraid of my own feelings. My own certainty that I would, if called upon, fight against a national-socialist terror regime began to crumble."

ELFI

(1) Fragments: What remains is the inability to speak.

(3) "After the summer program I started again a conversation with my grandparents with these unanswered questions (such as What about the misery, the guilt, that is couched in silence and presented only superficially?) conversation in which their silence remained unmoved. Against that, I no longer ask challenging questions -- [I am left with] only my speechlessness."

(4) "Speaking the German of minority: I do what minorities do: I identify only with my mother tongue. It is the "minority-German". I doubt my language ability but still hold to it strongly - which is OK, for it relates to the ambivalent feeling of not belonging to a country. Because language is like home. But if I face myself as a German the ... Holocaust, I have in mind only those destructive words. Without a language, I become homeless on this earth."

SUSANNE

(1) Ambivalence of feelings for perpetrator

(2) "... the feeling of sorrow and loss. One has these feelings also for a perpetrator" [her grandfather].

"If something hurts me, it is the opinion that one feels better as the grandchild of perpetrator than as the grandchild of victims.... What I am struggling with and what hurts me is the feeling that I might be seen simply as a continuation of my grandfather -- not in terms of family lineage but on a functional level, that is to say, the perpetrator within me. He was responsible for himself, just as I am responsible for myself."

"The emotional ambivalence to simultaneously condemn and hate someone from afar and yet to protect and wanting to love him is difficult to explain and not resolvable - it is certainly not 'socially acceptable'."

(3) ... bear in the future the ambivalence.

(4) "Through this program and its approach to family biography ..I first came to recognize this ambivalence inside of me Must I -- as a descendent of perpetrators -- be able to judge without contradictions?... I am at the beginning of a process but I can already feel that I have to bear this tension in the future, one way or the other."

SUSANNE

Planning my life as an analogy for the responsibility of knowing about post-Holocaust responsibility:

"The education and growth of ideas born this way ... are completely in my hands; so are its development and consequences. If one day I have fully raised these ideas, the past will not stop living in my present, and I never stop having to face my responsibility." (Attending this seminar: there I am faced with thoughts and feelings that I did not know before - and I realize: I have a responsibility.) "The responsibility demands a place in my life."

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Themes which were addressed:

- * Reflecting on what Auschwitz means to one's personal biography
- * Living under the burden of responsibility: you must not let it destroy you
- * Wanting to approach the perpetrator perspective
- * Inability to speak
- * Ambivalent feelings for perpetrators
- * Giving birth to post-Holocaust responsibility

Emotions which were expressed

- Feeling no longer empowered, feeling uncertain, no longer feeling as an observer
- Fear and uncertainty, helplessness
- Disappointed about missed chance, afraid of her own feelings
- Speechless, homeless
- Sorrow and loss, ambivalent feelings for perpetrator grandfather, confused
- Fear about the future of Germany
- Own certainty crumbled about being able to resist

Implications for prospective commitments

- It is not enough to keep the experiences to oneself, one should deal with people in the political right or who have no political opinion
- Does not feel the right to accuse the first generation
- Wondering about if, and how to return to Germany (not having the strength...)
- Learning from the past that every person has the potential to become a perpetrator
- Starting again a conversation with grandparents
- Bearing the ambivalence in the future
- Birth of an awareness about the post-Holocaust responsibility

INTERPRETATION

Moments of Transformation (1995)

- A. Non-German participants made people seen themselves on the perpetrator side
Interactions in a group with non-Germans provided an outside perspective which moved people to the perpetrator side. For East-Germans, this presented an enormous shift in their perspective.
- B. Not entitled to accuse grandparent generation
Accusations against the first generation and their involvement in the Holocaust are silenced by one's own self-awareness that they might be judged not differently from the point of view of their grandchildren.
- C. The view from the watchtower allowed insight into perpetrator feelings
Allowing oneself to feel the temptation which comes with the position of superiority, people can become afraid of their own feelings.
- D. The clashing of language meanings is intensified

In a minority situation, language conveyed identity - the German of a minority. Facing Auschwitz, destructive words tied to the Holocaust produce speechlessness.

E. Having to bear the ambivalence

Recognizing ambivalent feelings inside oneself regarding one's perpetrator grandfather: wanting to love and condemning at the same time.

F. Post-Holocaust responsibility is demanding place

Employing an analogy to interpret one's new awareness: Like giving birth to something new, this responsibility will not cease to live in one's life.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions will regard to all four exchange programs (1989, 1991, 1993, 1995). They intend to formulate central insights that I want to build on and problems which need to be addressed.

SUMMARY

Moments of Transformation (1989)

A. Realizing what it means to live as a survivor

Interpretation: Learning to grasp the painful aftermath of the *Shoah* for survivors requires several levels of listening (lecture, spending time in a family, etc.)

B. Becoming aware of anti-Semitic implications in a sermon

Interpretation: Uncovering one's own ignorance is made possible through exposure to other perspectives and peer discussion.

C. Having encountered Jewish perspectives, her own country looked different to her

Interpretation: Gaining new understanding about one's home country through learning to see with Jewish eyes (uncovering hidden, silenced truth).

D. Discovering one's own bias

Interpretation: Discovering unconscious clichés through direct encounter and honest self-perception.

Moments of Transformation (1991)

A. Painful discovery with one's own language

I: The closeness of the perpetrator heritage gets under the skin when the emotional bonding to one's mother tongue and openness to a survivor clash against another.

B. Survivor stories call into question German stories of affliction

I: Stories can convey the difference and abyss between victims and victimizers.

C. Discovering the degree to which the German group had dealt with the Holocaust.

I: Sharing of family histories can convey the degree of dealing with the Holocaust topic.

Moments of Transformation (1993)**A. Participating in the commemoration of others despite one's perpetrator heritage****I: Attempts to create a common time (title 1991) may be possible through invitation and identity awareness.****B. Being confronted with the prejudice that all Germans are Nazis****I: Distorted perceptions can create obstacles to facing one's own blind spots. Consider the temptation for Germans to look for "good Germans," but also, how much burden can young Germans bear?****C. Hope and trust experienced with survivors keeps her going in a difficult Germany****I: Seeing clearly the difficult reality in Germany - and being sustained by the hope/trust of survivors. Incredible gift! Therefore the real task lies in Germany.****Moments of Transformation (1995)****A. Non-German participants made her see herself on the perpetrator side****I: Outside perspective helps people to locate themselves in history and in a heritage.
This can foster identity formation and responsibility.****B. Not entitled to accuse grandparent generation****I: Honest self-evaluation may shift one's perspective. This can be the starting-point for a new intergenerational dialogue.****C. The view from the watchtower allows insight into perpetrator feelings****I: Closeness to perpetrator feelings can frighten people. Usually they are not approached, but it is necessary to glimpse the traps and to learn how to avoid them (since they can be found also in myself).****D. The clashing of language meanings is intensified****I: Similar to the exchange program of 1991; A.****F. Post-Holocaust responsibility is a demanding place****I: Instrumental metaphor of giving birth for interpreting the life-long process of facing the perpetrator heritage.**

Themes to be addressed

- **Meaning of German language referred to by survivors: pain, discrepancy (ambivalence), identity confusion.**
- **Factors shaping a new identity: differing perspectives in peer group, exposed to various sites, exposure to "the other."**
- **Issues of intergenerational relations: stopping accusations, honesty, taking over others task.**
- **Relationship of German Christian to Jewish people: confronting clichés, being exposed, vulnerability, stories.**

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